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_peter savieri_tai snath_mandy ord_the bedridden_they might be
giants_don burke_greg carrot_jason mcleod



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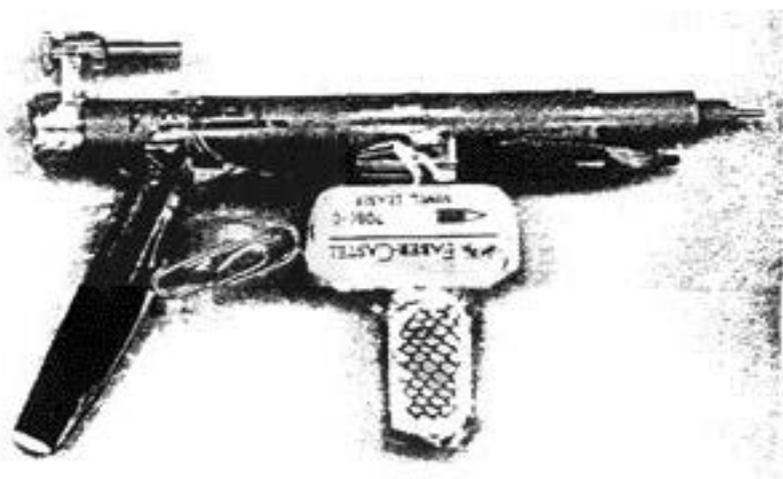
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'...What does not grow, dies; what does not face its truth, perishes; those without vision deserve the destruction that will fall upon them; those who believe that they can suppress freedom and yet live in freedom are hopelessly deluded. Either a nation faces its uncomfortable truths, or it is overwhelmed by them; for there is a prophetic consequence in the perpetuation of lies, just as there is an unavoidable fate for all those who refuse to see...'

Ben Okri 'Fables are made of this: for Ken Saro-
Wiwa (1941-96)' from *A Way of Being Free*.

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THE FARTHER I GO THE FARTHER BACK I GET.
— Mudhoney 1989

It seems like the longer I live and the more I learn the less I know. Looking back I now know that when I was eight I understood a heap of stuff — eight-year-old stuff. I knew everything I needed to know, trusted those I had to trust and understood how the world was. I didn't understand why different tv stations broadcast really good movies on the same night at the same time. Why couldn't they talk to each other and arrange different nights and different times so I could watch both cool movies? That point troubled me for years after. I also remember being very scared of nuclear war, the arms race and the cold war. I understood, in an eight-year-old way, what these things were and I didn't like them. Different events would also affect me and

I often cried because other people were sad or hurt or in trouble, but that was, I was told, a part of life and as I grew up I would have to deal with those things more and more. I didn't really like that idea, but I kind of accepted it.

In general, though, at eight I had it sussed. My whole life was ahead of me and even though there were things I didn't like I would get used to them. I would go from primary school to high school, then I'd be one of the big kids and everything would be alright. I had somewhere to get to.

Then at eighteen I knew it all. At the time I thought I knew more than I did. Sure, I understood the world from my point of view. I empathised with people, disagreed with my parents on everything and didn't want to go fight in a war in the Middle East, but I still thought I knew the good shit from the bad shit and that I could fix everything, as long as someone would give me a go. I was finishing school and I'd learned heaps and I was starting university, where I was going to learn heaps more. My whole life was ahead of me, so I was told, and the choices I made would affect me for the rest of my life, so I was told, and I only had one chance, so the choice I made had to be the right one, so I was told. I had to take responsibility for my choices and actions. I

wasn't perturbed by that, in fact I wanted to start taking responsibility for myself and for the world around me. I was told I had to go to university, get a good education, get a job and earn money. I had grown up, kind of, and was heading towards the 'somewhere' people told me about when I was eight. My destination was in sight.

At twenty eight I knew most of what I knew before is bullshit and that most of what I know now is probably bullshit too. (At thirty nothing's

'... THEN AT
EIGHTEEN I KNEW
IT ALL... I THOUGHT
I KNEW MORE THAN
I DID...'

changed.) Most of the things I was told at eighteen proved to be untrue. I honestly wish someone had said to me, 'It's ok if you don't know what you want to do or where you want to go. Don't be afraid to make wrong choices'. That would have taken so much pressure off. I hated university and even though I took very little formal skills from

my time there, I did learn one very important thing: I learned how to learn. I'm learning more and more every day and as the title of this article suggests, the more I learn the less I know. There are a couple of things I've found that help me understand the world. One is that it's not about getting anywhere, or working towards something or being 'somewhere', it's about space; and the second is that nobody is going to just give any of us a go.

My understanding of space has mutated and changed and folded in on itself over time. There are heaps of different types of space: personal, physical, outer, inner, public, cultural, political, economic, bureaucratic and creative (and probably lots more). The last six are the spaces that interest me most. These spaces tend to be made up by structures and norms and rules that help define the lanes we move along to get to the 'somewhere' — also defined by norms and rules — I was convinced I had to get to. At some point I began questioning those spaces and started seeking a deeper understanding of what they are, what they mean, how they interact with each other and how they impact on me, my thoughts and my life; and I investigated how I can affect them. It took me a while to understand that I have the right to affect them and as a part of a community I have to right to claim parts of them as my own, respecting others' rights to do the same. But what if I don't

agree with the choices given to me? What if those choices stifle, contract and restrict my space? What do I do? Searching for these answers lead me to create my own fluid, movable, ebbing and flowing 'somewhere' that is always around me.

The thing about these already existing spaces is that they create an environment where everybody is out for themselves, people look out for number one, power-structures and flows are established and continually reincarnated and reinforced and there is an idea that 'if it 'ain't broke don't fix it'. Well, what if you think it is broke? Can you fix it? What if there is a space over here called 'employment'? Now what if I want to do a job, but that job isn't allocated any space in 'employment' because 'job' is considered unprofitable. It's not unimportant. It may be considered very important by the space called 'cultural' for example, but 'employment' doesn't have time for an unprofitable 'job'. What then? Many would argue ignore 'job', by association ignoring 'cultural', and focus on 'employment'. Others might argue, ignore 'employment' and focus

on 'job' and 'cultural'. Neither is a long-term or sustainable solution. Maybe 'employment', 'job' and 'cultural' have to be questioned and understood in a greater depth with the idea to, in part, merge the three. Or maybe a new space needs to be created

... AT TWENTY EIGHT I
KNOW MOST OF WHAT I
KNEW BEFORE IS BULLSHIT
AND THAT MOST OF WHAT I
KNOW NOW IS PROBABLY
BULLSHIT TOO...'

next to 'employment' and 'cultural' and 'job', where the newly defined 'job1' can hang out and its importance is recognised, understood and respected. By creating our own spaces we can create mutually significant 'somewheres'.

Understanding this is important to me because it has meant I've had to reassess everything. It's not about the destination anymore. All throughout my teenage years and early twenties I was searching for that 'somewhere' that I was supposed to be heading towards. That 'somewhere' is always defined by the existing structures and spaces. I was very messed up by that search because I'd get down on myself for not being in the right lane to get

me closer to the 'somewhere'. Along my journey I had turned off without quite knowing it and when I found out I was a bit lost, and without a map, I became worried. I didn't understand where I was going, or why, so I became really cynical and cut off. Now I realise that along the way I abandoned the idea of getting 'somewhere'. I acknowledge that I don't know everything I need to know — nobody does — and I let myself be confused. Instead of looking for a 'somewhere' up ahead, I'm focussing on sharing skills, stories and knowledge; playing pranks; generating and supporting community; creating confusion and establishing new spaces. It might not seem like much, and I might not even make an impact, but I'm trying. This book is part of my attempt to create space. It's part DIY, part activist, part discussion and part theory.

I wanted to do a book that fused information-sharing, stories, myths, pranks and philosophies with the idea that anyone can and should create space, or spaces, for themselves; everyone should question and try to understand everything that is going on around them; and we all need to be critical. Don't settle for what is already there. Question everything. We all need to take responsibility for our own communities and our own actions. It's not a case of voting, for example, and thinking, 'Well I'm glad that's over for another three years'. Because it's not over. It's never over. Constant vigilance and maintaining some sort of control over our lives is important. Political changes, economic trends, legislative decisions, none of these things in our society are inevitable, as many politicians would have us believe — there are always choices, there are always alternatives and most things in life are open for negotiation.

Not all the following articles are written by me, and I don't necessarily agree with everything that's been published in this book, but I think it's important to publish a number of sides of an argument, let them collide and watch where their fragments scatter, in the nooks and crannies and cracks, in the spaces that don't always get a look in. It's up to you to look in those nooks and vacuum out the fragments from under the bed, or down the back of the stove, and to talk to and intercede with the new spaces created by

colliding arguments.

THANKS

Abig 'I like the cut of your jib' to the people who published *How to Make Trouble and Influence People* and *How to Stop Whining and Start Living*.

Big hugs to everyone who contributed articles, art, time support or illustrations to the book. Especially Tom Civil, Arthur Clover and Don Porter!

Regards to all the agencies who unquestioningly sent out their information to me. All I had to do was call or email people, introduce myself and explain I was doing a book and they were more than happy to send me stuff.

Abig thanks to Ada and Indy for being important parts of my life!

LIAR

from Buffy The Vampire Slayer
 'Lie To Me' (Season Two)

Buffy: Nothing's ever simple anymore. I'm constantly trying to work it out. Who to love or hate. Who to trust. It's just, like, the more I know, the more confused I get.

Giles: I believe that's called growing up.

Buffy: I'd like to stop then, okay?

Giles: I know the feeling.

Buffy: Does it ever get easy?

Giles: You mean life?

Buffy: Yeah, does it ever get easy?

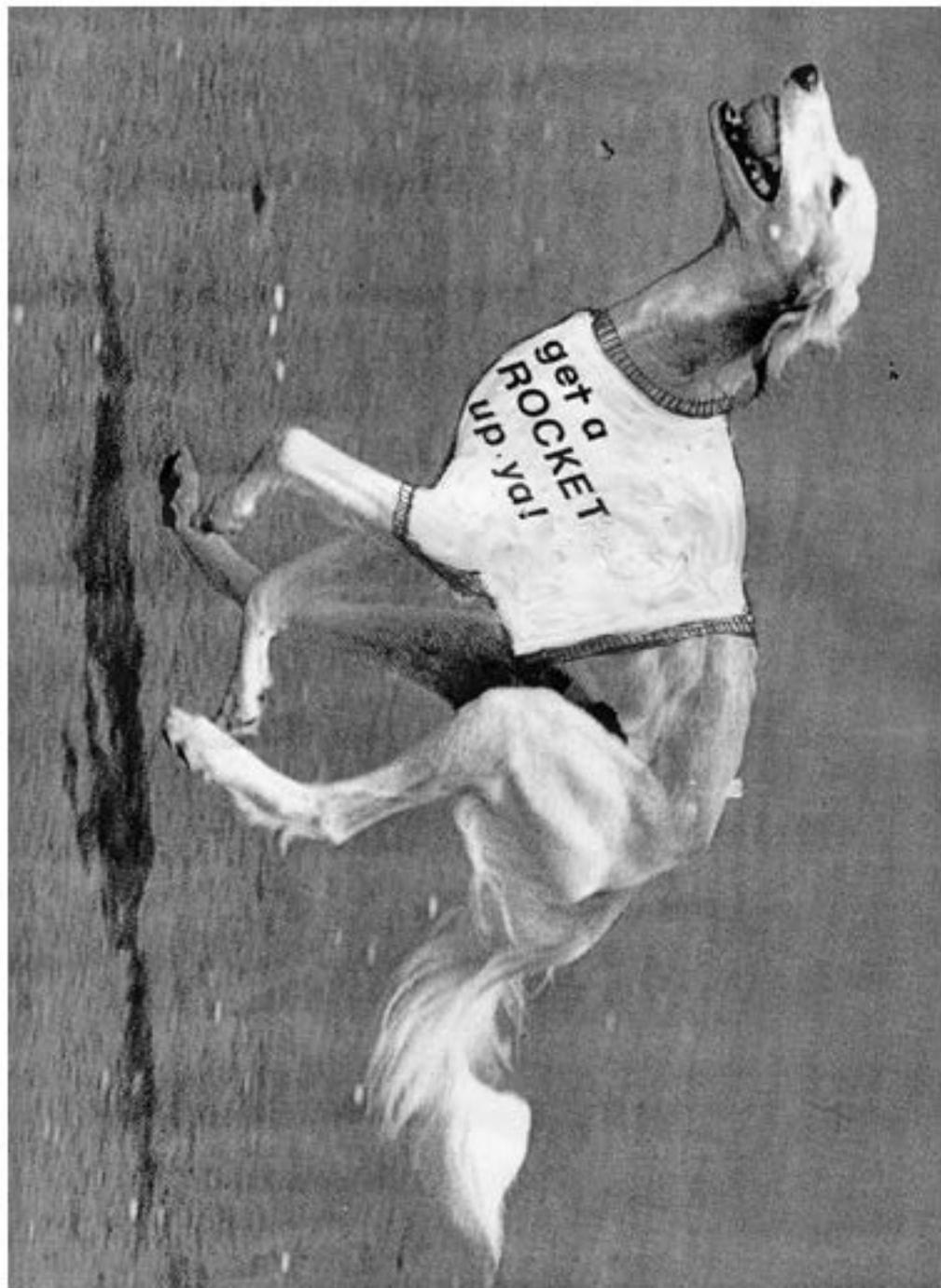
Giles: What do you want me to say?

Buffy: Lie to me.

Giles: Yes. It's terribly simple. The good guys are always stalwart and true. The bad guys are easily distinguished by their pointy horns or black hats and we always defeat them and save the day. No one ever dies... and everyone lives happily ever after.

Buffy: Liar.





FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI)

Freedom of Information laws exist in all states and territories in Australia (The states and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) each have their own FoI legislation) and a Freedom of Information Act for Commonwealth Government agencies also exists. The laws vary slightly in each state, but in general they give people a 'right of access' to documents of agencies and official documents of ministers. The Act identifies certain types of documents which are exempt. These are documents parliament believes should be kept confidential to protect essential public interest or the private business affairs of others. Exempt documents include internal working documents, those involving public safety or law enforcement, or 'commercial in confidence' documents that are increasingly used as contracts between governments and private companies that are contracted to run public authorities, such as public transport, or to build public infrastructure, such as roads. Freedom of Information laws give you the legal right to:

1. obtain information held by Commonwealth Ministers, Departments and almost all statutory authorities (called 'agencies' under the Act)
2. see documents, no matter how old, containing personal information about yourself
3. see non-exempt documents held by agencies (documents lodged on or after December 1 1977, or earlier if you need them to understand another document you already have. These include files, reports, computer printouts, maps, plans, photographs, tape recordings, films or videotapes)
4. ask for information concerning you to be changed if it is incomplete, out of date, incorrect or misleading
5. appeal against a decision not to grant access to a document.

Freedom of Information laws require Commonwealth Government agencies to release information about:

1. agencies, their organisation, their functions and operations
2. rules and practices which are used in making decisions, the kinds of decisions they make

3. arrangements they have for public involvement in their work
4. the documents they hold and how you can see them

To make a request for information ask the relevant agency to speak with its FoI contact officer. They will explain the process and possible charges. They are there to assist you in making your request. Identify the document you wish to see and present your request in writing. (Some agencies require a special form for this.) Include all necessary details about the documents you are seeking (a file number, reference to a newspaper report about it or describe the subject matter in which you're interested in). Give the agency an Australian address it can send the documents to. The agency will charge you for the time it takes to access your application and for the time to find, read and copy the documents (consultation time, photocopying, supervised inspections, tape transcription or computer output).

When the agency receives your request it must tell you it has received your request within 14 days, deal with it ASAP, talk to you about any difficulties it encounters when dealing with it and give you an estimate of fees and charges, if applicable, as soon as possible. You do not have to pay fees if you are requesting access to personal income maintenance documents (pensions, unemployment benefits, student allowances). You can ask fees to be waived due to financial hardship or because the documents are of 'public interest'. The agency has to tell you about

How To... Fake out the parents:

'Clammy hands is a good non-specific symptom. Fake a stomach cramp and when you're bent over moaning and wailing lick your palms. It's a bit childish and stupid, but then so is high school.

'Some people say a phoney fever is a sure thing. I don't think so. Get a nervous mother and you could end up in a doctor's office. That's worse than school.'

Ferris Bueller
from *Ferris Bueller's
Day Off* (1996)

whether it has decided to give you access or not within 30 days of receiving your request. (If an agency has to consult with a third party, it may extend the time to inform you of the charges by another 30 days.)

If an agency decides not to give you access to a document it must identify the documents withheld, supply written reasons for the decision and advise you on your rights of appeal.

If your request for access is refused there are four stages of appeal: internal review (will incur additional fee), Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT), the ombudsman, a court.

You can appeal against a decision to not let you see what you want when you want; remission of an application fee; the decision to charge you to see the information; the amount of the charge or fee; a decision that would let others see documents which you believe would unreasonably disclose personal information, your lawful business, professional affairs or commercial affairs of your firm; or decisions to give you access to documents about your physical or mental health through a qualified person and not directly to you.

THE AGENCY
HAS TO TELL
YOU ABOUT
WHETHER IT
HAS DECIDED
TO GIVE YOU
ACCESS OR NOT
WITHIN 30 DAYS
OF RECEIVING
YOUR REQUEST

Internal review: is where you ask the agency to reconsider its decision (as long as it wasn't made by the Minister or agency head). You must do this in writing, within 30 days of being told of the decision. You must include the extra fee. Someone other than the person who made the first decision will then make a fresh decision. You will be informed of the new decision within 30 days and written reasons if access is refused.

AAT review: the AAT is an independent body for reviewing the administrative decisions of agencies. You can appeal to the AAT if your FoI request was originally decided by the Minister or agency head, if you are unhappy with an internal review decision, or if there has been an agency delay. It decides whether the decision made on your FoI request was correct or not. It is able, in certain circumstances, to change an agency's decision.



The Drowning of the Daddo Brothers

The Bedridden

Andrew and Lockie were feeding the ducks,
 And drinking warm beer,
 Down by the pier.
 When Lockie fell in.
 When Lockie fell in.
 Andrew cried: 'Lockie my brother unlucky, you've never
 had luck quite this bad!'
 But the reply there came nil. The dark surface of the water
 was still.

Like any good brother he went: 'Oh bloody, bloody, bloody
 hell!

Oh bloody, bloody, bloody hell!

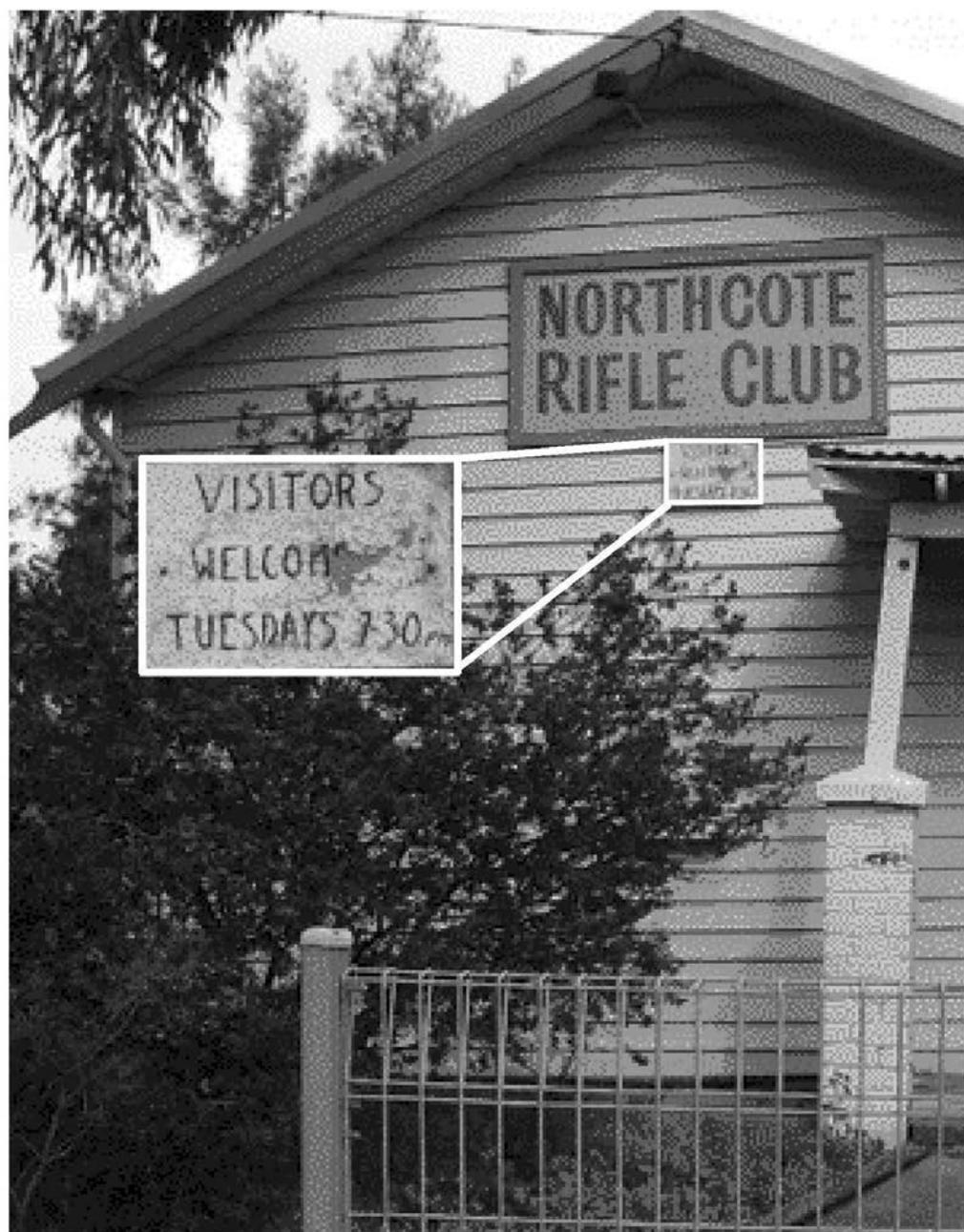
Oh bloody hell!'

Lockie's legs tangled by something down there.
 Andrew reached in and grabbed hold of his hair.
 And pulled as hard as he could. But it failed to do any
 good.
 He went: 'That's the last time that I'm coming down here.
 Or at least next time I won't drink so much beer'.
 And he slipped and he fell in.

Oh I can still hear him yellin:

'Oh bloody, bloody, bloody hell! X2

Oh bloody hell! X5



My Country

Dorothea McKellar

The love of field and
coppice,
Of green and shaded
lanes,
Of ordered woods and
gardens
Is running in your
veins.
Strong love of grey-
blue distance,
Brown streams and
soft, dim skies —
I know but cannot
share it,
My love is otherwise.

I love a sunburnt
country,
A land of sweeping
plains,
Of ragged mountain
ranges,
Of droughts and
flooding rains.
I love her far horizons,
I love her jewel-sea,
Her beauty and her
terror —
The wide brown land
for me!

I LOVE A SUNBURNT
COUNTRY...

Craig Garrett

In 1788 Sydney was invented. Etched out of the harsh environment, the colonisers made some important discoveries and invented some world-changing products — but it wasn't all easy going. In the beginning New South Wales (NSW) struggled. A combination of infertile soil, poor farming techniques, and a lack of fishing and hunting skills meant it was totally dependent on external supplies.

In October, 1789, the HMS Sirius was sent to Cape Town. On her return, eight months later, the situation was desperate. Even with new supplies the colony only had three months rations. Something had to be done. The Sirius was taken off active duty and a young inventor named Ben Lexen was put in charge of re-fitting her with a state-of-the-art keel. After many successful trials the 'fast keel' was fitted to both the colony's navel vessels: the Sirius and the Supply. Later known as the 'winged keel', it would take another 195 years before the true value of the design would be realised — during the 1984 'America's Cup' challenge between Australia II and Liberty. Boasting the fastest ships in the Royal Navy — and with a steady supply of fresh food, fashionable clothes and new tools — NSW prospered.

Pubs were built on every corner; beer drinking became the number one pastime; independent

music and dance prospered; the economy boomed; new home loans and car registrations increased; full employment was reached; and NSW possessed the largest number of brand names, products and inventions in the world. Amid all this, Carlton and United Breweries (CUB) — based in the Port Phillip District suburb of Abbotsford — was the colony's amber light. With icons such as Abbotsford Bitter, Carlton Draught and NSW Bitter (later 'Victoria Bitter'), CUB was immediately successful; partly because it sponsored the Port Phillip District-based NSW Rules football competition (beer and sport became synonymous) and partly because of Vegemite.

Early on, CUB stored its used yeast in tanks, but as the population grew — NSW diversified its product lines into NSW, Van Diemen's Land, Western Australia and South Australia — and as beer production expanded to meet demand, CUB ran out of tanks; so it turned to Fred Walker and Co. for help. Fred and his chief chemist, Cyril Percy Callister, invented a black, spreadable substance that Fred's daughter Sheilah named 'Vegemite'. From then on CUB sold its yeast by-product to Fred Walker and Co. who, in partnership with J.L. Kraft (a US cheese-maker) marketed Vegemite and Kraft Cheese Singles to the colonies. As one journalist said: 'The colonies are eating Vegemite sandwiches on the keg's back'. People demanded new products: Broken Hill Proprietary steal, Commonwealth Sugar

The stark white ring-barked forests,
All tragic to the moon,
The sapphire-misted mountains,
The hot gold hush of noon,
Green tangle of the brushes
Where lithe lianas coil,
And orchids deck the tree-tops,
And ferns the warm dark soil.

Core of my heart, my country!
Her pitiless blue sky,
When, sick at heart,
around us
We see the cattle die —
But then the grey clouds gather,
And we can bless again
The drumming of an army,
The steady soaking rain.

Core of my heart, my country!
Land of the rainbow gold,

For flood and fire and
 famine
 She pays us back
 threefold.
 Over the thirsty
 paddocks,
 Watch, after many
 days,
 The filmy veil of
 greenness
 That thickens as we
 gaze.

An opal-hearted
 country,
 A wilful, lavish land —
 All you who have not
 loved her,
 You will not
 understand —
 Though earth holds
 many splendours,
 Wherever I may die,
 I know to what brown
 country
 My homing thoughts
 will fly.

Refinery sugar, the Gold Coast, egg-laying
 man mals and reliable workboots. Thongs just
 didn't cut it. It took a small footwear
 manufacturer from Hobart Town, Van Diemen's
 Land, to fill the boot niche.

John Blundstone and Son, established four
 years earlier, had already received a design award
 from the Industrial Design Council of Van
 Diemen's Land, a Van Diemen's Land Export
 Award, and had commenced manufacturing
 waterproof injection moulded footwear
 (gumboots). John Blundstone hooked into the
 interpretive tap-dance subculture by investing in
 Tapdogs — a little-known troupe from Newcastle.
 Wearing only Blundstone products, Tapdogs —
 with their personal brand of working class tap-
 dancing — became a colonies-wide hit (and
 Blundstones became the choice of footwear). For
 years tap-dancing enjoyed 'number one' dance
 status, until boot-scooting shot to prominence just
 after WWII.

At the same time in Victoria (Victoria and
 Queensland were added to the NSW marketing
 mix in the mid-1800s and Van Diemen's Land was
 re-branded Tasmania), something far different
 was happening. The Kelly Gang, the first punk
 band, was agitating for a separate Irish state.
 Managed by Makohn Corrugated, who owned a
 shop called Corrugated (it sold Corrugated iron),
 and headed by singer Ned 'Rotten' Kelly and bass
 player Joe Vicious, The Kelly Gang penned the
 songs 'Anarchy in the Colonies', 'Corrugated Iron

Armour' and 'Pretty Jeil denie'. Even without radio play they catapulted to stardom. Despite the band's success and the construction boom Malcolm's business faltered. With new products eroding market share he needed publicity. He arranged for The Kelly Gang to headline a Glenrowan punk gig dressed in Corrugated iron armour and wearing the new range of Blundstones: Dr Blundstones. It was the last time the band played together. The plug was pulled after one short set, Joe Vicious's violent on-stage antics got them expelled and the police were called. Corrugated iron suffered from the bad publicity and fibreglass and asbestos were the materials that took the soon-to-be-invented Australian Federation into the next century.

AustraliaSM was patented on January 1, 1901. NSW Rules became Australian Rules; Foster's[®] the national drink; cricket, the national sport; Canberra, the national capital (completed in 1926); and 'Aussie, Aussie, Aussie... Oi, Oi, Oi'[®] was graffitied on walls across the country in celebration. On the surface it was all good, but underneath the Federation was on the brink of collapsing before it began. The situation was desperate. In backyards, parks and ovals across AustraliaSM long grass was taking over. Backyard cricket was abandoned, park footy was driven on to the streets and BBQ areas were neglected. Something had to be done.

Again a young inventor, this time by the name of Mervyn Victor Richardson, came to the rescue. Using a couple of peach tins and simple two-stroke logic he invented the lawnmower— setting the fledgling nation down a path from which it has never deviated. Ever since, the smell of two-stroke has wafted across the nation every Saturday morning.

The lawnmower united AustraliaSM in ways the telegraph, federation, the telephone, radio, tv, satellite and the internet have failed to. No matter where you live in AustraliaSM the weekend means putting work, school, politics, economics, religion, etc. on hold in order to push Vir tas, play cricket, fill Hill's Hoists with washing, open ring-pulls, eat Vegemite, kick footys, drink beer, scoff Tim Tams, hug Eskys, sip Bundaberg rum, laugh with Kookaburras, flip-flop thongs, swim in Speedos, glug from wine casks, polish blackboxes, wear Bonds and heat up BBQs.



There was a point of time in Canberra when I was working part time in a pub. I was also signed up with Centrelink until I could earn enough money to live on from the pub job. My Centrelink 'case worker', the man assigned to basically make all the big decisions regarding my income and general standard of living, was the most obscenely pissed mutant that frequented the same Pub I worked at.



On a Friday or Saturday night he would get so out of control that the doormen usually ended up chucking him out. When I had my appointments with him at Centrelink he used to look at me with confused deja vu eyes and ask 'Do I know you from somewhere else?' At which I would reply

no.. I
don't think
so.. nup..
definitely
not...
NO



I had this notion that if he knew that I knew, he might hold it against me. Ironically he had been too drunk to remember anyway

REVIEW PROCESS FOR CENTRELINK

Appeal structure

Internal

Authorised Review Officers review decisions made by Centrelink staff regarding payments. They are the first step in the review process. They won't review administrative decisions — the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) handles this, just decisions about social security, education or training payments. You can ask for a review in person, by phone or in writing and they can take from two to three weeks.

External

Social Security Appeals Tribunal (SSAT) — Taken from the *Social Security Appeals Tribunal Information Handbook*.

The SSAT is the first external level of review regarding decisions made by Centrelink about social security, education or training payments. It is completely independent of Centrelink and Commonwealth departments and able to affirm, vary or set aside Centrelink decisions.

Who can appeal?

People who think Centrelink has made an incorrect decision relating to their pension, benefit, allowance or student assistance. Note: the decision first has to be internally reviewed by a Centrelink authorised review officer (ARO) or delegate.

Costs

Appeals to the SSAT are free. To help applicants get to their hearing the SSAT will pay reasonable travel expenses and if needed will supply an interpreter. It does not pay for solicitors or other professionals, nor does it pay for the travel costs of friends or relatives accompanying the applicant.

How to appeal

Applications may be lodged any time after Centrelink's internal review decision is made, but it is best to do so as soon as possible after that decision and certainly within 13 weeks. (This is so that if the SSAT finds in favour of the applicant full arrears may be paid.) Applicants can arrange for an advocate, employ a solicitor or represent themselves. Note: the SSAT can dismiss an appeal if the applicant fails to contact it when asked, fails to make an appointment for the hearing or fails to attend the hearing.

The SSAT has its own application form which is available from Centrelink offices, authorised review officers or from the SSAT itself. Appeals may be lodged by:

post, fax or in person at any SSAT office or at any Centrelink office
phoning the SSAT on 1800 011-140 (freecall).

teletype machine from anywhere in Australia. Call 1800 060-116 (freecall).

After an appeal application is received an acknowledgement will be sent to the applicant. Centrelink then has 28 days to provide the SSAT with a written explanation of its decision. When that document is received a copy is sent to the applicant along with any other relevant papers and an appointment for a hearing is made. The applicant may also request access to their Centrelink files under the Freedom of Information Act if they are not satisfied that all relevant documents have been provided.

Advocates

Advocates work within community legal and welfare centres and can assist people prepare for an appeal. Each tribunal office has a list of these agencies. Advocates are able to attend the hearing.

The hearing

The hearing is informal and its primary purpose is to hear what the applicant has to say. Centrelink presents a written submission. The SSAT members listen to the applicant, ask questions and clarify any unclear issues. This means applicants do not have to express themselves in 'legal language'.

Hearings are conducted in private, although an applicant can bring a partner, friend or relative for support. You will be given the opportunity to tell the tribunal what you think is important and to ask any questions if you are unsure of anything. Do not be afraid to ask questions about any aspect of the hearing/appeal.

There are usually two or three independent SSAT members at each hearing who have expertise in law, welfare and public administration (usually Centrelink procedures and practices). If the appeal is a medical matter, either the legal or the welfare member is replaced by a doctor.

If the applicant is unable to travel or lives in a remote area and will not or cannot travel to the hearing, the hearing can be done by conference telephone. The SSAT also visits a large number of country centres.

After the hearing

The SSAT usually makes its decision on the day of the hearing and the decision, including full reasons, is written up and sent to the applicant within 14 days. Where necessary the SSAT may adjourn a matter until a later date. If this happens the applicant will be informed in writing and given the opportunity to comment on any adverse material which comes to hand. The SSAT cannot make a decision contrary to the law.

Note: the SSAT cannot order Centrelink to continue payments pending the outcome of an appeal. Enquiries about continuing payment pending the appeal should be made to the regional manager of the Centrelink office that made the original decision.

Further appeal rights

Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT).

If the applicant is not satisfied with the SSAT's decision she or he has the right to lodge an appeal with the AAT. This must be done within 28 days of receiving the SSAT's decision. The AAT has a national telephone number: 1300 366-700 (local call fee only) and there are offices in each capital city except Darwin.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman

In some situations it will be more appropriate to complain to the Ombudsman. If you are upset with the way you were treated by Centrelink, as opposed to an actual decision Centrelink made, you can make a complaint to the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman is an independent person who investigates complaints about the actions and decisions of Commonwealth government agencies to see if they are wrong, unjust, unlawful, discriminatory or unfair; it seeks remedies for people affected by defective administration; and it acts to improve public administration. It cannot force agencies to accept its recommendations, however, most agencies carry out the recommendations quickly and informally. You can make a complaint by telephone, fax or the internet. National complaints line: 1300 362-072 (cost of a local call).

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HR EOC)

The HR EOC is a free judicial body with judges called Commissioners. It takes complaints about discrimination because of sex, ethnic origin, disabilities and sexual preference.

Privacy Commission (Part of HR EOC)

This Act stops Commonwealth departments from giving personal information to unauthorised people or companies. The Privacy Act has a limited jurisdiction.

Members of Parliament

Whenever you complain to an MP they have to investigate the complaint. You'll probably talk to a staffer who phones the department and states the problem.

Application Checklist:

1. Make sure you have asked for an internal review of Centrelink's decision. This must occur before the SSAT can look at the case.
 2. If you think your circumstances have changed don't wait for the appeal outcome — lodge a new claim with Centrelink. This can avoid hardship while waiting for the appeal to be finalised.
 3. If you have no income or are in hardship you may be eligible for a continuation payment pending the outcome of the appeal. You may also be eligible for an immediate payment. If you think this applies to you:
 - contact Centrelink about possible payment
 - tell the SSAT of your circumstances when you lodge your appeal and ask for your appeal to be dealt with urgently.
 4. Lodge an appeal with the SSAT in writing or by telephone.
 5. Tell the SSAT if you need an interpreter.
- Gather together any information, documents and/or evidence you think may be relevant.



FIGHTING CENTRESTINK

Governments in the 1970s decided Australia needed an underclass of unemployed dependent on a range of welfare organisations for survival. It was politically impossible to openly introduce this policy so they began a campaign of victimisation: the new underclass would be called 'dole-bludgers' and, under the guise of saving taxpayer's money, there would be wave after wave of 'welfare cheat crackdowns'. It was imperative everyone, including the underclass themselves, blamed dole bludgers for everything and that the general population believed the new underclass were 'bad'.

The official government argument is that by making unemployed people repeatedly apply for work, fill out form after form and continually do course after course they will gain skills and self esteem — and will eventually get work. The reality is that the economy needs unemployment to stay above 5% to keep labour costs low, and politicians need the votes and money of businesses to stay in power. It is impossible for the unemployed to get out of the 'welfare cycle' because governments impose structures that ensure the unemployed are a permanent social feature.

Centrestink doesn't exist to help get people jobs; it exists to reinforce the unofficial employment policy and to victimise the poor. It hires psychologists disguised as 'occupational counsellors' to get dirt on the unemployed, to evaluate them and then label them 'mentally ill'; it controls people's lives with the mark of a pen; and it overwhelms the unemployed with paperwork, administration and bureaucracy. It is no wonder that the underclass attacks Centrestink on its own turf.

Bomb it with paperwork

Rule number one for fighting Centrestink: don't waste your own resources. Centrestink has free photocopiers, fax machines (staff will teach you to use the machines and you can then you can send them a huge fax), phones, and computers and laser printing. Use them.

Phone (1800 numbers)

Most government departments have 1800 numbers they give to certain customers. Save each freecall number you're given. Calling a 1800 number might get a transfer to another area which doesn't have freecall number or might get you a transfer to an interstate section.

Postage (reply paid AAA23)

Centrestink has a Reply Paid number (Reply Paid AAA23) allowing you to send letters without a stamp. Put it on the envelope, write 'Centrelink' and the address you are posting to under it, then add three vertical lines where the stamp should be. Send a sample to a friend's address to ensure it works.

You can also send letters without stamps to government departments and 'CENTRESTINK HAS FREE FAX MACHINES, PHOTOCOPIERS, COMPUTERS AND LASER PRINTING, PHONE AND POSTAGE (REPLY PAID AAA23)' when they receive the letter they pay the postage plus an Australia Post surcharge. Don't put your return address on the outside of the package or you'll get the bill. As with the freecall numbers, save all reply paid numbers you find.

When Centrestink requires copies of application letters and dole diary make six copies of each and send the parcel to six different Centrestink locations using their reply paid number.

Dole diary and job applications

The dole diary doesn't need to ruin your life. Make the bureaucrats suffer. Make ten copies of your dole diary, job applications and resumes; crudely wrap them up; write the reply paid number on them; and send copies to the minister and chief executive officer in Canberra, the state director, your case manager, your local office, your contact person, your Job Network provider and a few country Centrestink offices. Request each addressee save everything for future reference. Later make Freedom of Information requests

asking for copies of everything you sent. If they don't have them request a review. This will waste their time, ensure your job seeking efforts are verified and protect you in the future.

Reviews

The smallest failures of employees to answer your questions should be reviewed by an authorised review officer (ARO). If requesting a review by phone ask for a receipt number; by post ask for written acknowledgment; and if in person ask them to put your request on the computer while you wait.

Ask questions

It helps to learn the rules and regulations and to learn how to question and argue before you have trouble. Call the telephone service and ask hard questions. When they can't answer, ask to be transferred to the policy section. Keep pushing for answers. You can ask to discuss this anonymously. Also, get a bureaucrat's direct number and, using a Centrestink phone, call the ten numbers above and below. Again, ask questions. (Write down their names for future reference.) This will increase your knowledge of the system, so when you have to fight you'll be ready.

Copy everything

Copy all documents. When you no longer need them bundle them, use 'Reply Paid AAA23

Handy hint:

When phoning Centrestink the employee opens your file and answers questions. You can ask Centrestink employees to make a record of their response. You can ask them to read out what they have written and provide an electronic receipt number. This number can later be quoted to identify what the employee wrote. This protects you from the file note being lost, deleted or changed. The receipt number is protection.

Centrelink' and send them to some obscure country Centrestink office. This will trigger numerous phone calls and faxes and waste their time.

The frozen file

A frozen file means access to your file is limited to one or two bureaucrats, so office and telephone service employees can't access your file to fix things up. The complaints hotline will also be frozen out too. This is bad news but here is how to fight them.

Phone the 'complaints hotline' (freecall) many times each day. Phone the special 'frozen file number' repeatedly. Phone the teleservice number without saying your file is frozen and allow them to discover it themselves. Write general complaints to politicians and bureaucrats using an identical form letter for each. Phone fifty numbers near the special frozen file number using the Centrestink phone. You will be phoning all the employees around the office of your frozen file employees. Go right through the review and appeal processes (frozen files are an administrative procedure). Send huge boring faxes. Send Centrestink copies of everything they send you.

Handy hint:

Use Centrestink social workers to your advantage.

An ex-bank robber told Centrestink he wanted a payment within fifteen minutes or he'd rob a bank and blame them. They checked his file and discovered he was a criminal with a bank robbing history. They told him to come back in an hour. He returned expecting good news or the police. It was the former. For some people a social worker can get things going.

Discovering names and addresses

Addresses can be obtained on CD Rom telephone directories where a name, a number or an address identifies all their details. The Telstra

CD is rubbish, but Oz On Disk and other good ones are sold in software shops.

Electoral records list 90% of all people, give their whole names and are a public document. You can read them at Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) offices.

There are over forty public database records. There are PressCom and similar searches available from schools and libraries. And, of course, the internet.

Guerrilla training manuals

The books *Getting Even; Revenge is Sweet; Screw Lots of Others; Advice and Backstabbing and Mudslinging Techniques*; and *Kick Ass*, by George Hayduke (a revenge expert) are widely available in libraries and can be purchased on the internet.

Don't Get Mad, Get Even, by Alan Abel

EcoDefense A Field Guide to Monkey Wrenching by Dave Foreman and Bill Haywood offers sabotage instructions against logging, mining and road building industries.

Guerrilla tools

Gloves; sunglasses; hats (to stop hair or anything getting into envelope); a small blade (cut upholstery, scratch glass and paint, open bags); superglue; paint remover; spray paint; nails; garlic juice (to squirt over carpet); and permanent markers.

If you get caught don't justify your actions or confirm or deny anything. Just walk away. If the police order you to stop then stop. If you are taken in for questioning ask for a solicitor. Don't answer questions. Always be polite. The police are often happy to take your name to scare you the first time.



SPACEMATIC
Heat resistant



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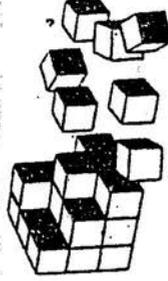
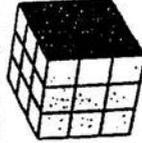
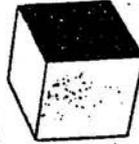
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HOW TO DEAL WITH JOB NETWORK MEMBERS

Written by an ex-job network agency worker

1. Understand the difference between 'job matching' and 'intensive assistance':

Centrelink never explains this to jobseekers. Job matching is simply the getting and filling of vacancies. Intensive assistance is what used to be called 'case management'. Jobseekers who are judged (by a complicated formula in Centrelink's computer system) to be eligible are sent letters asking them to choose a preference for whom they want to be referred to. If they don't pick someone (or if their preferences have no vacancies within the next 2 weeks) they're automatically referred to someone within ninety minutes travel.

This should not be confused with the requirement to register with a job network agency for job matching purposes — which everyone has to do when they go on to Newstart. It's just as futile and annoying for the job network member as it is for you and be understanding if your entry isn't welcomed with open and loving arms — they'll probably guess that you're only doing it because Centrelink wants you to. It's a bit of a give away when people come in to register for work and respond when asked for their resume that they've got one at home!

2. Job matching is the job network contract that's least well remunerated:

Basically employers lodge a vacancy and if an unemployed person is placed with it the agency gets a fee from DEWR (once they've verified 15 hours in the job). The fee is only about \$300 which means that job matching is not very profitable — the job network agencies that went bust in the first round of contracts were only doing job matching. Because of this, the people doing job matching are the lowest paid and most overworked. This explains why getting a job off the touch screens is so hard — you'll often find a receptionist doubling as a job match person and operating basically by collecting resumes and forwarding them to employers. The best way to get a

job through a job network member (if that's what you want to do) is to be nice to whoever's dealing with the vacancy — keen but not demanding is the balance that works. It also helps to get to know the agency staff (as long as you're nice to them — of course). They're usually women and they get treated like shit by a lot of male jobseekers who assume that they're dumb receptionists. Being pushy and demanding is not the way.

3. Intensive assistance

The first thing to understand is that they are not part of Centrelink. This is a good and a bad thing. It means they are not directly subject to Centrelink's management line. However, if they think you're not serious

'THE BEST RULE OF THUMB
IS ALWAYS TO APPEAL.
YOU'VE NOTHING TO LOSE
AND YOU'LL BE SURPRISED
AT HOW OFTEN YOU WIN...'

about looking for work then there's a big problem. They get paid by results — their organisation will get thousands of dollars if you get and keep a job and personally they will usually be paid a bonus. They are

also working under the knowledge that if their organisation doesn't do well enough it may not get its contract renewed next time around and they'll be out of a job. Their caseload will be full of people who are probably unemployable (typically about one-third will be over 50, and in the northern or western suburbs a similar proportion won't speak English — and that's not counting the ex-cons, drug addicts etc). So if you're relatively young, fit and speak English you'll be like an oasis in the desert. Needless to say they won't be pleased if they think you're not serious.

4. The basic rules

Answer all correspondence and make sure you notify Centrelink of any changes of address as soon as possible.

Job network members use the Centrelink mailhouse to send you letters and they go to the same address as your fortnightly dole form. So no one will believe you if you say you didn't get a letter unless it's clear on the system that you changed address at that time. Most importantly, attend the first

interview for intensive assistance. The job network organisation gets a fee for signing you up. So they not only are expected by Centrelink to report if you don't show for this, they have a big financial imperative to recommend a breach. In the end, if you never show up, the only way they can get you off their caseload is for you to be breached three times and made inactive (cut off benefits altogether).

Try and suss out your intensive assistant consultant/case manager's general attitude from the initial interview. There are as many different ways to doing this job as there are personalities. Many consultants, like me, will concentrate all their energies on the clients who want to find work. Because frankly, that's the way to get outcomes. But many will give a hard time to clients who they think are working black or just being plain unreasonable. If it becomes apparent that your consultant is one of the latter then be careful not to give them any excuse to think that you're bludging or bullshitting them.

5. What can they do to you?

Job network members can't breach clients. But they can notify Centrelink 'of a possible breach'. The most common breach and the most likely to be upheld is a failure to attend in interview (or at least ring up with a reasonable excuse). That's why I made answering correspondence the first rule.

The next most common breach would be for declining a job or not attending a job interview. These are a bit harder to make stick as they involve a third party (it would usually be your word against and employer's). They also involve a more complicated procedure which not all job network people are on top of. If you are breached for either of these it's quite possible that not every 'i' has been dotted or 't' crossed. In that case a gung ho Centrelink staff member might still apply the breach, hoping you won't bother or will be too intimidated to appeal against it. The best rule of thumb is always to appeal. You've nothing to lose and you'll be surprised at how often you win. Finally, a Consultant may try to talk to you about your appearance (body piercings, clothing styles etc). While it's perfectly legitimate for them to raise these issues — they're certainly relevant to your ability to find work — they can't

breach you for not getting a haircut or for not removing a nose ring. However be aware that if you are actually offered a job predicated on doing this it may be a different story. Remember the infamous Paxton beat-up on *A Current Affair* (1995) where the Paxton kids knocked back jobs, allegedly because the Paxton's would cut their hair or wear the uniforms, at a Queensland resort. That wasn't breachable because the job was more than 90 minutes travel from his home.

6. Can you get out of doing intensive assistance?

The answer is, 'probably not'. (YES YOU CAN) You can request to exit if you're working part-time for more than 15 hours a week. Few consultants will mention this because if you've already got a part-time job you're obviously a good chance of converting to a full-time job and becoming an outcome for them. The other most common grounds for an exit is if you've got a medical exemption from Centrelink for three months. However, if you don't think it's appropriate to be in intensive assistance, for whatever reason, and simply refuse to attend you'll be breached. Nor should you simply ring up and argue the toss. The job network provider can't exit you from their caseload. All they can do is get you to sign an exit form and forward that to Centrelink for processing. If there are grounds for exiting you (with the exception of part-time work) most consultants will want you to exit, so turn up and explain the situation to them. It's not in their interests to have people on their caseload who aren't keen or who have major problems. Even though it's not their decision — it's Centrelink's — and there's a limited number of reasons to justify an exit. But if it's possible to exit you they'll most likely try.

Finally, if you're genuinely looking for work then a good intensive assistance provider isn't a bad thing to have — at least, unlike Centrelink, you're dealing with one person not a bureaucracy. And what's more, they probably have a good idea of what you're up against in looking for work — in fact probably better than you do. As long as you're straight with them, most will be more interested in helping you get a job than hassling you about filling out the right forms the right way.

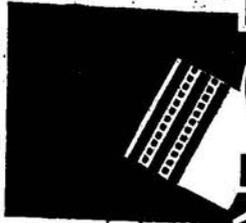
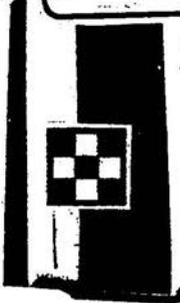
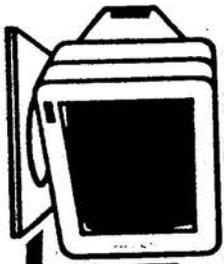


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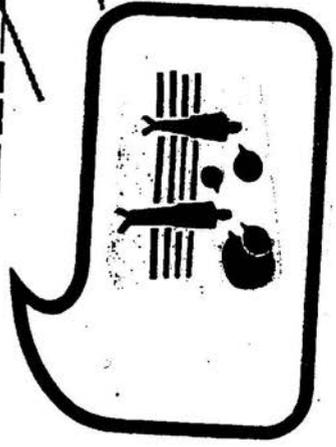
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HOW TO GET OUT OF WORK FOR THE DOLE (WFTD)

Dole Army website <www.dolearmy.org>

If you are under 25 and have been unemployed for six months you will be required to take part in WFTD. If you are 25-34 years old on Newstart they can make you do it after being on benefits for 12 months. Has the government upheld its part of mutual obligation arrangement by providing you with a real job opportunity? Do they pay you a benefit above the poverty line (\$255 per week for a single person)? If the answer is 'No!' (and let's face it, it is) then don't take part in WFTD!

How to get out of WFTD:

1. Study part-time (12 hours per fortnight), or about 2 subjects per fortnight for most courses.

2. If you enroll full-time and you are under 25 you will be on Youth Allowance, 25 and older and you qualify for Austudy. Warning: Don't enroll and leave. You will get busted and have to pay back a lot of money. If you're going to enroll hang around and do a few classes.

What if you are not working or studying? Don't stress, you can still get out of it. You just need to use a little initiative! If you do some quick reading into WFTD you would notice that the part-time work component is measured in hours you've worked, not money you have made. You could work a really shit

'WE [THE LIBERAL PARTY] DO NOT SUPPORT THE INTRODUCTION OF A WORK FOR THE DOLE SCHEME'
JOHN HOWARD *HERALD SUN* 17/2/96.

job that pays \$3 per hour. If you do the 16 hours of part-time work needed to avoid WFTD you'll earn 16 x \$3 or \$48 dollars for the fortnight. Because it is under the \$65 dollars allowed earnings you'll be exempt from WFTD without your payments being reduced.

But what sort of job pays \$3 per hour? There are a few sweatshops around that would pay about that, Nike might be able to help you out, but the Dole

Army wouldn't dare recommend that shit. What you need is an employer who is going to pay a shit wage without really expecting much of you in terms of actual work.

Become self-employed! There's nothing a capitalist government loves more than an entrepreneur. Centrelink loves to include 'reallife' examples of young people dealing with its services in its glossy propaganda. It's funny how all the pictures of people in the brochures have facial piercings. Maybe that's why they think no one's employing them... Who knows? Who cares... Anyway here are some Dole Army style scenarios you won't find in the Centrelink propaganda:

Neil was getting some pissy amount per fortnight on Newstart, he knew WFTD was coming up and it would be a complete waste of his time so he decided to become a professional musician instead.

He went down to the local council offices and bought a busking permit. Because he was on the dole he couldn't really afford to pay for music

lessons hence his music was really shit. He busked for a total of 16 hours per fortnight and only made \$35 dollars. (Minus the cost of his busking permit, Neil actually made a loss on his original start-up costs.) Neil was so enthused and loved busking so much he

'WORK FOR THE DOLE AND MUTUAL OBLIGATION MUST BE SEEN FOR WHAT IT IS AND FOR WHAT IT'S NOT. WORK FOR THE DOLE IS NOT A JOB CREATION PROGRAM. WORK FOR THE DOLE IS A PURE COST CUTTING PROGRAM. WORK FOR THE DOLE DOES NOT HELP THE UNEMPLOYED FIND WORK.'

DAVID KEMP MINISTER FOR EDUCATION. *MEET THE PRESS*
CHANNEL 9

decided to do it every fortnight. Being an honest hard working capitalist entrepreneur he always declared his \$35 dollar earnings to Centrelink. When WFTD came around he was exempt!

Jane is 17 and gets an even pissier amount on Youth Allowance than Neil does with his Newstart. She decided to make herbal soap. So she went to the local market to sell it. Because her benefit is 33% below the official poverty line she can't afford to buy nice oils and herbs to put in the soap. So, like Neil, her venture isn't too successful. Lots of people felt a bit sorry for poor old Jane and she managed to sell a few bars. Subtracting the costs incurred in the production of the product she only made around \$13 for her 16 hours of work per fortnight that she subsequently declared to Centrelink.

Centrelink had to rely on the honesty of Neil and Jane as far as hours and declaration of income was concerned. It was hard for Centrelink to prove that Jane and Neil were actually carrying out their little capitalist entrepreneurial ventures. Neil playing his guitar in Rundle Mall or Jane selling her soaps at the Channon market. Neil and Jane were very honest when telling Centrelink about the hours they worked because they felt they were 'mutually obligated' to do so. And let's be real for a second — it was only fair right? Seeing that the government had been so open and honest with them.

Jane and Neil knew that WFTD was coming up. Neil being over 25, had 12 months of being on the dole before he was due, but Jane being under 25 and on Youth Allowance only had six months on the dole before she was required to do WFTD. So they started their ventures well in advance. You only need to claim money for eight out of the 13 fortnights leading up to WFTD. So if you want to start your own biz and get out of WFTD, do it now!



Dear John (this is a 'Dear John' letter).

Racist polluters! Racist polluters!

That's the reaction that greeted me while I was travelling overseas earlier this year. Every time someone asked me where I was from, after answering 'Australia', people would respond with, 'Ahhh, racist polluters!' You and your government have tainted and sullied the reputation of all Australian citizens.

You are a disgrace.

Australia has a poor image and reputation overseas. We are not respected. Your government's ongoing actions regarding the Kyoto protocol are sickening, the way your government is dealing (or not dealing) with Reconciliation is nothing short of ignorant and your actions recently regarding the refugees on the Tampa is dishonourable. How dare you ask East Timor to take the refugees! East Timor only gained independence last year — remember? How dare you ask New Zealand to take the refugees! There are only three million people living in New Zealand — about the same population as Melbourne! How dare you transport the refugees to Nauru! The smallest nation in the world, it has a population of about 12,000 (Wagga Wagga has over 50,000). There are suburbs in Australia that have more people living in them than Nauru! It doesn't even have its own currency — it uses Australia's!

You disgust me.

What is your problem? What is the fixation with not letting the refugees set foot on Australian soil? Where do you get off talking about sovereignty? We have a foreign head of state. A head of state you support. We are not a sovereign nation, we are still a colony. You saw to that.

You have no honour in your soul. How insecure are you?

And telling the Australian people that Jakarta hadn't returned your phone calls is akin to a child telling his teacher his dog ate his homework. Did you really think the Australian people would believe you?

You are a liar.

You are a selfishness, small minded and self-interested man. Your blatant racism is not something to be proud of. The deal with Nauru and New Zealand you described as a 'real breakthrough' is nothing more than a representation of your selfish attitude. You have ignored the dignity and humanity of the refugees. You have dehumanised them by ignoring the real issue, people, and by talking about non-personal, non-human issues, such as sovereignty, surveillance, Australian Soil, Indonesia, and of course money.

You are repulsive.

Australia is the only developed country in the world to lock up, put in prison, detain those who apply for refuge. Your government regularly takes in less people than it can. According to a report in the *Guardian*, 2040 places from the resettlement program were left unfilled last year. We do not receive as many applications from refugees compared to other nations, yet we have the most draconian immigration laws in the developed world. Refugees are not entitled to benefits, are granted only three-year temporary visas, they have no rights to English classes and are unable to bring over families they left behind. Basically, even if they are accepted into Australia, after being arrested and locked up, they are set up to fail because your government won't give them permanent residency, which limits their access to life skills and basic economic support.



PRIME MINISTER
CANBERRA

Mr Craig Garrett
PO Box 1297
NORTH FITZROY VIC 3068

6 November 2001

Dear Mr Garrett

Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding the Government's approach to unauthorised boat arrivals. I apologise for the delay in responding.

The Government has acted decisively but compassionately to protect Australia's territorial integrity and combat people smuggling and illegal people movement in the region. While the Government remains committed to meeting our international and humanitarian obligations, we will also maintain our sovereign right to protect our borders and to decide who will enter our country.

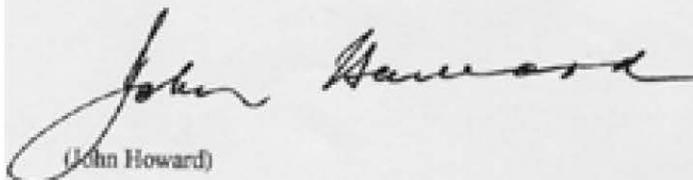
On 17 September 2001 the Full Bench of the Federal Court of Australia confirmed that the Australian Government acted within its powers in taking the action it did in relation to the people rescued by the MV Tampa.

While those who had been rescued were on board the MV Tampa, the Government ensured that they were properly cared for, through the provision of appropriate food, shelter, medical assistance and other supplies. The Tampa rescuees have now safely reached their destination in Nauru or New Zealand and their claims for refugee status are being assessed.

Australia has a proud humanitarian record and the Government remains committed to meeting Australia's humanitarian obligations. It will ensure that asylum seekers have an opportunity to have any claims they may have to refugee status determined, and that they are not returned to a place of danger.

Thank you for writing on this important issue.

Yours sincerely



(John Howard)

'Your Racist Friend'

They Might Be Giants, from the album *Flood*.

This is w here the party ends. I can't stand here listening to
you and your racist friend.

I know politics bore you, but I feel like a hypocrite talking
to you and your racist friend.

It w as the loveliest party that I've ever attended. If
anything w as broken I'm sure it could be mended. My head
is tired from bobbing and pretending. Listen to some bullet
head and the madness that he's saying.

This is w here the party ends. I can't stand here listening to
you and your racist friend.

Out from the kitchen, to the bedroom, to the hallw ay. Your
friend apologises, he could see it my w ay. He let the
contents of the bottle do the thinking. Can't shake the
devil's hand and say you're only kidding.

Dear Prime minister

Greg and i were talking today. It was raining outside; gloomy melbourne weather. I was warm, however, as i was sitting in front of the heater. I had an epiphany - if it was a week day, i couldn't be in front of the heater with my cup of tea, i'd have to be out, at work or school. So, i therefore put it to you to attempt to pass legislation to make everyday sunday. Especially in winter & summer.

Thanking your consideration

Greg Carrot & Indy Grrrl.

AUSTRALIA'S ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Australian Electoral Commission, AEC <www.aec.gov.au>

Voting

It is compulsory to enroll to vote when you are 18. Australia is one of only a few nations in the world where legislation provides for a system of compulsory voting.

Elections

A federal election is held at least once every three years because the Constitution limits the term of office for members of the House of Representatives to three years.

Senators are elected for a term of six years, but half-Senate elections are usually held at the same time as the House of Representatives.

A 'double dissolution' election results in both houses of Parliament (the Senate and the House of Representatives) being dissolved.

If a member of the House of Representatives dies or resigns a by-election is held for that division.

If a senator dies or resigns the state parliament of the state where the vacancy occurs must choose a person from the same political party as the previous senator.

House of Representatives (the House)

1. Three year terms.
2. 150 members, elected from single-member divisions.
3. Full preferential voting system.

Senate

1. Six year terms. Half retire every three years. Territory senators have three-year terms.
2. 76 members (12 from each state and two from each territory), elected from multi-member constituencies.
3. Proportional representation—single transferable vote and above the line voting.

Funding to political parties

At the last federal election, funding of approximately \$1.69 per House and Senate vote was granted to candidates and Senate groups who received at least 4% of the formal first list preference vote. This level of funding is indexed to the consumer price index (CPI). Disclosure of certain financial details is required by candidates, registered political parties and other groups in returns filed with the AEC.

Voting systems (federal)

Single member system (used in the House of Representatives)

Under this system electorates are based on population and the people enrolled in one electorate elect one member to represent them in the House of Representatives. Voters are required to indicate an order of preference for candidates on the ballot paper. In Australia 'full preferential' voting is used. This means voters must show a preference for all candidates listed on the ballot paper. Under this system the candidate who wins majority support of an electorate is elected.

Proportional representation (used in the Senate)

Under proportional representation parties, groups and independent candidates are elected to the Parliament in proportion to their support in the electorate. All Australian proportional representation systems are 'single transferable vote'. This means that each elector's vote can be transferred between candidates in the order of the elector's preferences.

How votes are counted

In proportional representation candidates have a quota of votes they need to reach before they are elected. Two things can happen:

1. when candidates receive exactly the quota of votes they need they are elected and their ballot papers are put aside
2. when candidates receive more than the quota they need, they are elected and the surplus votes are passed on to continuing candidates according to the voter's preference.

Following the distribution of each surplus any candidate who has reached the quota is elected and any resulting surplus passed on again.

Once all surplus votes have been distributed the candidate with the fewest votes is excluded and all of his or her votes are passed on to the continuing candidates (also according to the voter's preference). The process of distributing surplus votes and excluding the candidate with the fewest votes continues until the required number of candidates is elected.

The Senate uses all the ballot papers the elected candidate has received to transfer the surplus. This means that the transfer value is calculated as follows: number of surplus votes divided by the number of ballot papers received.

For example: if 1000 ballot papers are used to transfer a surplus of 500 votes, each paper is now worth half of one vote (50%).

This occurs for each redistribution of surplus votes. While each ballot paper is worth a single vote; under the 'single transferable vote' system a fraction of each vote can be used to elect one candidate and the remaining fraction can be distributed to other candidates as part of the surplus. So not all votes cast in proportional representation are worth 'one vote'.

... IF 1000 BALLOT PAPERS ARE USED TO TRANSFER A SURPLUS OF 500 VOTES, EACH PAPER IS NOW WORTH HALF OF ONE VOTE (50%).'

Even though it is confusing, generally the composition of a house of Parliament where members are elected using proportional representation (the Senate) usually better reflects the proportions of votes received by candidates on a state-wide basis than houses where members are elected to single seat electorates (the House of Representatives).

Constitutional referendums

For a referendum to produce constitutional change there must be a double majority:

a majority of voters in Australia

a majority of voters in a majority of states must agree to the changes

Before a referendum can be held a Bill must be passed by both houses, or passed twice in either the House of Representatives or the Senate. The referendum can be held no sooner than two months and no later than six months after the Bill is passed.

Since Federation there have been 42 constitutional referenda, but only eight have been approved.



WHY I VOTE

Rivkah

(This piece was written two years ago, two weeks before the 2001 Federal election. The Liberals got back in. When I wrote it I really believed there was a chance that they would not. I don't know that the outcome has changed the way I think, exactly, but it certainly changed the way I feel. This piece was written when I had more faith).

I don't vote just because I want to play devil's advocate to the vote-refusers (who, me?), and nor is that why I'm writing this. I'm writing this because I believe that change must be made by any means necessary, by every means which present themselves, and no matter how flawed and minor this opportunity to participate in change is, I can't walk away from it when it's shoved in my face. The older I get the more I realise that no single action of mine is going to transform the world, not casting a vote, nor chaining myself to a bulldozer or warhead or mountain grey gum in East Gippsland. Every action, relatively of course, has some significance. I used to disparage 'change from within'; now it still frustrates the hell out of me, but I am beginning to see that 'within' is not the monolith I used to think it was, but a huge and multifaceted arena with the scope to be shaped, undermined, subverted and re-formed; from within, from without, from above and below and sideways too.

... I BELIEVE THAT CHANGE MUST BE MADE BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY, BY EVERY MEANS WHICH PRESENT THEMSELVES, AND NO MATTER HOW FLAWED AND MINOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN CHANGE IS, I CAN'T WALK AWAY FROM IT WHEN IT'S SHOVED IN MY FACE.'

What passes for our 'democratically elected government', whether I like it or not, wields enormous power in this society, subtle and major controls over all of our lives; the power, in many and increasingly frighteningly

obvious ways, over life and death. I don't like it any more than you do. But it is the reality and will remain so until the majority of this country decides not to make it so, which I can't see happening in the near future any more than I can see the lights of the socialists' utopia shining on the horizon. I am an activist but I'm also a pragmatist. Ignoring this system does not mean it's going to go away. Refusing to vote to me is tantamount to taking your bat and ball and going home because the game's not fair. It doesn't change the game, and all it means is that the other team wins unopposed.

There is a saying which I think I'm about to misquote: 'All it takes for evil to flourish is for good people to do nothing'. I realise that not voting is not 'doing nothing', But — and this is largely why I vote — if I don't vote, and if all the good people don't vote, the voices of those who do vote resonate far louder, and I'm scared of what they're saying. At this time in particular, when the difference between the two major parties is shrinking faster than the measure of their compassion, I feel that a vote for a minor party (and I'm not naming any names, I don't owe allegiance to any of them) may for once be more significant than just a protest vote. And I wouldn't run for Parliament myself but I take my metaphorical hat off to those who do, with the stomach

'... IF I DON'T VOTE, AND
IF ALL THE GOOD PEOPLE
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OF THOSE WHO DO VOTE
RESONATE FAR LOUDER,
AND I'M SCARED OF WHAT
THEY'RE SAYING.'

to play the game of continual compromise, with the patience to try and force the grinding machinery of government to give an inch, and the conviction in their ends to justify the painful means. I vote because sometimes it's useful to have people to lobby, to table our petitions, to present my point of view in an arena in which it

would be ignored if it came out of my mouth. I vote because I can't say that the Northern Territory isn't better off with a Labor Government with Freedom of Information legislation and without mandatory sentencing. I vote because, I admit, I like Bob Brown and I'd like to see him stay where he is. I vote because I'm too much of an egotist to pass up even the most minor

opportunity to have my say. And I vote a little bit in part because, however flawed and tokenistic I realise they are, I can participate in the 'free and fair elections' the East Timorese, among others, have fought so hard for, and it seems churlish of me to disclaim that — yes, right.

I vote but I don't hold too much stock in it. I vote and I also agitate, cogitate, facilitate, meditate, mediate, extrapolate (over-exaggerate...). I bleed and I vote. I smash the state and I vote. I don't shoot, and I vote. I vote, but I'm not going to write the Government a letter and tell them why.



'... I do have a test today, that wasn't bullshit. It's on European Socialism. I mean really, what's the point? I'm not European. I don't plan on being European, so who gives a crap if they're socialists. They could be fascist anarchists, it still doesn't change the fact that I don't own a car.'

Ferris Bueller from
*Ferris Bueller's Day
Off* (1986)

Jason McLeod
17 Harrison St,
East Brunswick,
Victoria 3057.

Betty Brown,
Divisional Returning Officer,
Australian Electoral Commission,
Division of Wills,
4 Homer St,
Moonee Ponds,
Victoria 3039.

October 4, 2001

Dear Ms Brown,

Thank-you for your letter dated October 2, 2001. Rather than reiterate some of my many philosophical and faith based conscientious objections to representative democracy and voting in state and federal elections, please refer to my original letter dated August 28, 2001.

The only thing that has really changed since I last wrote is that we now find ourselves in the midst of global preparations for war. As you would be aware, the Australian Government, without any debate in parliament, has thrown its support behind the war on terrorism. As so many have observed, there can be no war on terrorism, war *is* terrorism.

The loss of life and suffering caused by the attacks on the pentagon and the twin towers of the world trade centre: the icons of militarism and capitalism, is a great tragedy. I firmly believe that this terrorist attack is a result of the violence and suffering wrought by U.S foreign policy, the purpose of which is to protect U.S interests won by exploitation and secured by violence or the threat of violence. Many aspects of the Australian government's foreign policy, for example, the policy to support the territorial integrity of Indonesia and consequently Indonesia's armed forces, and domestic policy, particularly in relationship to a closed Australia and the mandatory detention of refugee claimants, supports oppression. Oppression and the inability of ordinary people to be able to meet their needs, in turn precipitates struggles for liberation, many of which use violence. This violence results in repression from the state which only fuels further counter-violence, compounding the cycle of violence.

In light of this, please also understand my refusal to enroll to vote as a small and prayerful refusal to sanction state sponsored terror: oppression caused by government policies and repression from the state against people who rise up in protest or who flee oppression elsewhere. In these dark times I find my faith in nonviolent action as a means to struggle for justice affirmed.

Consequently, I wish to confirm that I will not be enrolling to vote. Instead of placing my faith in the state and representative democracy I will continue to redirect my energy to human-scale structures, policies and processes that support peace, social justice and ecological sustainability. In relation to the struggle for democracy I will continue to support campaigns for participatory democracy and community sovereignty.

Yours Sincerely

Jason McLeod

DEFAMATION

Overview

The Australian Constitution does not expressly protect freedom of speech. In 1992 the High Court of Australia held that a right to freedom of expression, in so far as public and political discussion were concerned, was implied in the Constitution. This right was thought to be an essential requirement of democratic and representative government and thus implied into the Australian Constitution, which had established such a system of government. Subsequent cases have made determinations on the scope of this implied freedom. It has been found to extend to the publication of material:

1. discussing government and political matters generally
2. relating to the performance of individuals of their duties as members of the Parliament
3. discussing the performance, conduct and fitness for office of members of the Commonwealth and state legislatures.

The right does not extend to more generally to a right to freedom of expression where political issues are not involved.

Australian defamation law

Basically defamation law is an attempt to balance the private right to protect one's reputation with the public right to free speech. It allows people to sue those who say or publish false and malicious comments. There are two types of defamation:

1. Oral (called slander). Comments or stories told at a meeting or party.
 2. Published (called libel). A newspaper article or television broadcast.
- Pictures as well as words can be libellous.

Anything that injures a person's reputation; their family; their professional standing; or if other people are likely to be induced to shun, avoid, ridicule or despise them can be defamatory:

1. You tell your friends that the boss is unfair. That's slander of the boss.
2. You write a letter to the newspaper saying a politician is corrupt. That's libel of the politician even if it's not published.
3. You say on television that a building was badly designed. That's libel due to the imputation that the architect is professionally incompetent, even if you didn't mention any names.
4. You sell a book that contains defamatory material. That's spreading of a defamation.

The fact is nearly everyone makes defamatory statements almost every day. Only rarely does someone use the law of defamation against such statements.

What constitutes defamation?

No two states in Australia share the same defamation laws — but they can be grouped. QLD and Tasmania have complete codification. WA has a code with limited application to civil actions. Victoria, SA, the ACT and the NT all apply common law with similar small statutory modifications. Common law is applied with more significant statutory modifications in NSW.

Whether a statement is defamatory involves determining what the statement means or 'imputes', and then assessing whether that meaning or imputation satisfies the definition of defamation. What the defendant intended to convey is generally irrelevant; rather, most courts will apply the meaning that the 'ordinary', 'reasonable' person would draw from the material.

Liability

Any person who intentionally or negligently takes part in or authorises the publication of defamatory material can be sued for defamation. In the case of a newspaper the editor, writer, publisher, printer and proprietor are all potentially liable. 'Innocent' distributors are not liable, but distributors are not considered innocent if they knew or should have known that a document

contained defamatory material. Knowledge may be inferred if the allegedly defamatory material appeared in a publication with a reputation for publishing such material.

An action for defamation may be initiated anywhere the allegedly defamatory material was published. Publication is said to occur in each place where the material is read, seen or heard by a person other than the person defamed. If a publication is read in more than one state or territory, the plaintiff may sue in the jurisdiction which offers the best advantages. National publications must constantly try not to run afoul of any of the eight different defamation laws operating in Australia.

‘THE [IMPLIED] RIGHT [TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN AUSTRALIA] DOES NOT EXTEND TO MORE GENERALLY TO A RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION WHERE POLITICAL ISSUES ARE NOT INVOLVED.’

Defenses to defamation

Australian jurisdictions recognise a number of defenses. The elements of the defenses and their availability vary between jurisdictions. The principal defenses include:

1. justification
2. fair comment
3. absolute privilege
4. qualified privilege
5. unintentional defamation
6. triviality (satire)
7. apology.

The defence of ‘justification’ is satisfied in half of the jurisdictions (SA, Victoria, WA and the NT) by proving the truth of the defamatory imputation. In the other jurisdictions (Queensland, Tasmania and the ACT) the defendant must also demonstrate that the defamatory imputation was published for the ‘public benefit’ and in NSW that it relates to a matter of ‘public interest’.

The defence of fair comment is available at common law in SA, Victoria and the ACT. The law has been partially codified in NSW, and is fully codified in Queensland, Tasmania and WA — although in WA there is authority that the common law defence also continues to be available. All jurisdictions require that the comment must be:

1. fair (a person could honestly hold that opinion)
2. concerning a matter of public interest (the private life of a public official is
3. not a matter of public interest unless it is material to his or her fitness for office)
4. based on facts which are:
 - stated or indicated in the material
 - true or absolutely privileged.

That information shown to be false was published in the public interest is a defence in several jurisdictions. However, publishers must be able to establish that they acted reasonably in believing the information to be true. To do so, they may need to disclose a confidential source. Since few publishers are willing to do so it becomes exceedingly difficult to establish this defence.

Public figures

Neither in common law nor any of the codes are politicians or other public officials required to sustain a greater burden of proof concerning criticisms of their public functions than are private individuals. In practice most defamation actions are brought by public figures (in large because of the high costs of litigation) and most concern statements regarding public affairs. To some extent, the defence of fair comment protects newspapers against claims from public figures; nonetheless, public figures win a significant number of cases and this undeniably must have some chilling impact on papers, especially the smaller regional ones which cannot so easily afford to defend, let alone lose, a libel suit.

The high cost of civil litigation is an important issue. Legal aid is not

normally available for defamation or malicious falsehood and contingency fees are not allowed. However, government ministers have sometimes had their costs underwritten.



The Greenhouse effect. 10 easy ways the Australian Government can make a difference.

1 Cancel the Don Burke ads - you'll save \$5.9 million in the lead up to the election.

2 Subsidise renewable energy by \$6,000 million and give fossil fuel companies only \$200 million to compete - instead of the other way around.

3 Stop clearfelling Australian forests at the fastest rate in the developed world - you'll reduce our emissions by 50 million tonnes, protect our water resources and biodiversity, and reduce salinity at the same time.

4 Stop marketing Australian coal to developing countries as 'clean coal'.

5 Stop greenwashing Australia's worst polluting companies with the Greenhouse Challenge program as the first phase 90% of companies failed to meet their own emission reduction targets, yet all received 'participation certificates'.

6 Ratify an equitable and just Kyoto Protocol which has no loopholes for nuclear power or monocultural plantations, and which recognises the ultimate need for 60% emission reductions.

7 Recognise as legal refugees those people whose homelands have already been devastated by climate change.

8 Develop transition plans for polluting industries to create jobs and counter the mass redundancies of the past ten years.

9 Use your role in the World Bank to stop indenting third world countries with inappropriate coal fired power stations.

10 Implement a carbon tax - the only proven measure to reduce emissions, support sustainable industries and maintain a healthy

and equitable economy as petroleum reserves decline.

Let the government know you want action not celebrity gardeners. senatorhill@aph.gov.au

www.ipcc.ch
www.risingtide.net
www.climateactionweb.net
www.fox.org.au
www.climateaustralia.org
www.corpwatch.org
www.sign.net

“ I love the greenhouse effect. Wouldn't want to do anything about it though. When you listen to fossil fuel company lobbying and ignore public concern, winning the election becomes difficult. And that's why the the Commonwealth Government is pretending to do something about it. They're spending \$3.9 million on a PR exercise to try and put the responsibility back on the Australian public, rather than cleaning up their act. They're paying my company lots of money to tell you to stop using your remote control, when they should be doing these 10 easy things that'll really make a difference! ”



Don Burke

**** as usual quite of the identified celebrity gardeners.

HOW TO AVOID/FIGHT DEFAMATION

The law of defamation is supposed to protect people's reputations from unfair attack. In practice its main effect is to hinder free speech and protect powerful people from scrutiny.

Defenses

When threatened with a defamation suit most people focus on whether or not something is 'defamatory'. But there is a more useful way to look at it. The important question is whether you have the right to say what you said. If you do, you may have a legal defence. There are three main types of defence:

1. what you said was true
2. you had a duty to provide information (it was in the public interest)
3. you were expressing an opinion.
4. there is an extra defence if you are a parliamentarian and speak under parliamentary privilege, in which case your speech is protected by 'absolute privilege', which is a complete defence in law. The same defence applies to anything you say in court.

What can happen

There are numerous threats of defamation. Most of them are just bluffs. Even so, often a threat is enough to deter someone from speaking out, or enough to make them publish a retraction.

The first step in a defamation action is to begin 'proceedings for defamation'. Statements of claim, writs or summons shouldn't be ignored. If you receive one seek legal advice.

The defamation case can go to court, with a hearing before a judge or jury. However, the majority of cases are abandoned or settled with only a small fraction of cases going to court.

The problems

There are several fundamental flaws in the legal system (cost, selective application, complexity). The result is that defamation law doesn't do much to protect most people, but it does operate to inhibit free speech.

Cost

If you are sued for defamation you could end up paying tens of thousands of dollars in legal fees — even if you win. If you lose, you could face a massive payout on top of the fees. The large costs mean that if you don't have much money, you don't have much chance against a rich opponent — whether you are suing them or they are suing you. Cases can go on for years. Judgements can be appealed. The costs become enormous. The result is that defamation law is often used by the rich and powerful to deter criticisms. It is seldom helpful to ordinary people whose reputations are attacked unfairly.

Unpredictability

People say and write defamatory things all the time, but only a very few are threatened with defamation. Sometimes gross libels pass unchallenged while comparatively innocuous comments lead to major court actions. This unpredictability is a tremendous inhibition of free speech. Writers worried about defamation cut out anything that might offend. Publishers knowing

'... It's not that I condone facism, Or any other ism for that matter. Isms, in my opinion, are not good. People shouldn't believe in an ism they should believe in themselves. I quote John Lennon:

"I don't believe in Beatles I just believe in me".

A good point there. Afterall he was the walrus. I could be the walrus. I'd still have to bum rides off people.'

Ferris Bueller from
Ferris Bueller's Day Off (1986)

how much it can cost to lose a case have lawyers go through articles to cut out anything that might lead to a legal action.

Complexity

Defamation law is so complex that most writers and publishers prefer to be safe than sorry, and do not publish things that are quite safe because they're not sure. Judges and lawyers have excessive power because outsiders cannot understand how the law will be applied.

Slowness

Sometimes defamation cases are launched years after the statement in question. Cases often take years to resolve. This causes anxiety, especially for those sued, and deters free speech in the meantime. As the old saying goes, 'Justice delayed is justice denied'.

Who sues for defamation?

In Australia, a common sort of defamation case brought to silence critics is political figures suing, or threatening to sue, media organisations. The main purpose of these threats and suits is to prevent further discussion of material damaging to the politicians. Other keen suers are police and company directors. People with little money find it most difficult to sue.

Media power and defamation

One of the best responses to defamatory comments is a careful rebuttal. If people who make defamatory comments are shown to have gotten their facts wrong, they will lose credibility. But this only works if people have roughly the same capacity to broadcast their views. Therefore it is difficult to rebut prominent defamatory statements made in the mass media. Free speech is not much use in the face of media power. There are cases where people's reputations have been destroyed by media attacks. Defamation law doesn't provide a satisfactory remedy. Apologies are usually too late and too little to restore reputation — monetary payouts do little for reputation.

Most media organisations avoid making retractions. Sometimes they will defend a defamation case and pay lots of money rather than openly admit being wrong. Media owners have resisted law reforms that would require retractions of equal prominence to defamatory stories.

Options

In practice, the structure of the court system and the media serve the powerful while doing little to protect the reputation of ordinary people. They undermine the open dialogue needed in a democracy. There are various options for responding to uses of defamation law to silence free speech. Each has strengths and weaknesses.

Avoid defamation

Writers can learn simple steps to avoid triggering defamation threats and actions. The most important rule is to state the facts and let readers draw their own conclusions. Be sure that you have documents to back up statements you make. Sometimes understatement — saying less than everything you believe to be true — is more effective than wide claims.

If you are writing something that might be defamatory, it's wise to obtain an opinion from someone knowledgeable. (Remember, though, that lawyers usually recommend that you don't say something if there's even the slightest risk of being sued.)

Another way to avoid being sued for defamation is to produce and distribute material anonymously. Use printers and photocopiers that cannot be traced. For those using electronic mail it's possible to send messages through anonymous remailers, so the receivers can't trace the sender.

These techniques of avoiding defamation law may get around the problem, but don't do much to eliminate it. They illustrate that defamation law does more to inhibit the search for truth than foster it.

Say it to the person

Send a copy of what you propose to publish to people who might sue. If

they don't respond, it will be harder for them to sue successfully later, since they haven't acted to stop spreading of the statement. If they say that what you've written is defamatory, ask for specifics: which particular statements or claims are defamatory and why? Then you can judge whether their objections are valid.

It's not defamatory to criticise a person to their face or to send them a letter criticising them. It's only defamation when your comments are heard or read by someone else.

Keep a copy for posterity

If you have to censor your writing or speech to avoid defamation, keep a copy of the uncensored version — in several very safe places. You might also wish to inform relevant people, especially those who might threaten defamation, that you have saved the uncensored version.

Defamation law distorts history. How nice it would be to read the uncensored versions of old newspapers, if only they existed! By saving the unexpurgated versions, you can help challenge this whitewashing of history.

Call the bluff

If you are threatened with a defamation action one strategy is to just ignore it and carry on as before. Alternatively, invite the threatener to send the writ to your solicitor. Most threats are bluffs and should be called. The main thing is not to be deterred from speaking out. The more people who call bluffs, the less effective they become.

If you receive a defamation writ, try to find a solicitor who is willing to defend free speech cases at a small fee or, if you have little money, no cost. Shop around for someone to defend you.

Use publicity

Just because you are sued doesn't mean you can't say anything more. (Many organisations avoid making comment by saying that an issue is sub

judice — underjudicial consideration — but that's just an excuse.) You can still speak. In particular, you can comment on the defamation action itself and its impact on free speech. It's also helpful to get others to make statements about your case.

A powerful response to a defamation suit is to expand the original criticism. Defamation suits aim to shut down comment. If enough people respond by asserting their original claims more forcefully and widely, this will make defamation threats counterproductive.

Recommend law reform

Law reform commissions have been advocating reform of defamation law for decades. Possible changes include:

1. public figure defence so that it's possible to make stronger criticisms of those with more power
2. adjudication outside courts, to reduce court costs
3. elimination of monetary payouts, requiring instead apologies published of equal prominence to the original defamatory statements.

In spite of widespread support for reform among those familiar with the issues, Australian law remains much the same. That's because it serves those with the greatest power, especially politicians who make the law and groups that use it most often.

Fixing the law is at most part of the solution. It's also necessary to change the way the legal system operates.

Campaign to reform the legal system

Any change that makes the system cheaper, speedier and fairer is worth pursuing. The sorts of changes required are:

1. reducing costs that are disproportionate to damage done or large compared to a party's income
2. allowing court orders to remove tax deductibility for the legal costs of corporations assessed to have acted high-handedly
3. making laws simpler
4. introducing compulsory conciliation

Selected references

1. *ABC All-Media Law Handbook: for Journalists, Presenters, Program Makers, Authors, Editors and Publishers* (Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 1994, 2nd edition).
2. Robert Pullan, *Guilty Secrets: Free Speech and Defamation in Australia* (Sydney: Pascal Press, 1994).

[Accessed in November 2003. This document is located on Brian Martin's suppression of dissent website, which includes other information on defamation. Whistleblowers Australia
Box U129 Wollongong University, Wollongong NSW 2500
Web:
www.uow.edu.au/arts/sts/bmartin/dissent/

5. speeding up legal processes.

Speak out

Petitions, street stalls and public meetings can be used to directly challenge the use of defamation law against free speech. One possibility is to circulate materials that have been subject to defamation threats or writs. Another is to protest directly against those who attempt to use defamation law to suppress legitimate comment. If enough people directly challenge inappropriate uses of the law, it will become harder for it to be used.



Then you called them communist menace and stage an attack from your own bases
Then the government death squads destroy their empty faces

You sent embargos on countries who don't agree or finally do revolt
See a free country can't sell their natural resource on a global free-market vote
The countries that sit in the NATO seats are the same dom
And the butchers they empower keep the rest of the seats
And the countries ostracised by embargo that form the rest
a non-aligned organisation

Aunton — so they could be heard
You call this a free market and your system democratic
But it's now a taxing empire that sends its shots out dead
Well you can take my contentment, me sense of security
You can beat me from head to toe until I bleed

You can starve me or freeze me, it's all the same to me,
Cause in my mind I know I want to be free,
You sent your psychologist to evaluate me and give a report
I'm more stable than he is — I'm beginning to see

In this frustration of war, it's one purpose
I know of your tactics to break the price
Separate love forever, I'm refused by
In the maze of our memories we live together and
In our minds we are together and

You can murder my land, make
Just to tell your provincials you
Your possessive ego crushes my fr
But I know in my mind I want to be
You fought Ireland as an orgel
You fought them as a country

But they fought you as a people and were oblivious as to
If you act like rats you get treated like this
But now you are rebutting cause who stood like
Like rats you were scrambling

What to report in the media to tell to those which
When Angolans and Serbs and Chinese and Nicaraguans and Zepanastas and Iranians and
Cubans and Irish are always the ones who have died

'THE BALLAD OF UN AND NATO' the Tossers from the album Long Dim Rc

You say you're telling me right now of how you think that it should be
By the hand of democratic law and the hand of decency
I guess you won't talk law to me or tell me any stand

all the triggers
ut you refuse to shake the hand
head of sitting content in your
to tell me what you see, 'cause I don't see a lot

ow democratic your laws when it comes and necessarily changed
I guess you won't talk law to me or tell me any stand
I guess you won't talk law to me or tell me any stand
I guess you won't talk law to me or tell me any stand

and ignore political struggles
without political
and my
aid common law promoting

countries
and Nambria, South Africa
er you gave up
and taxes natural resources, oil,

1978
distinguish treaties
you put in democratic, so-called governments as head of state that are willing to adhere to y
bidding and easily profits from their state
And you come in with phone companies, McDonald's and Nike plants
But the truth is under the pretence of defence
But the truth is under the pretence of defence

In case the poor rise up against the governments
You've helped to empower and make the final stop

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Advertisement



Be very alarmed

Even Australia is not immune to terrorism.

There are strong indications that the Australian "Prime Minister", John Howard, and his "government", are preparing unprovoked acts of violence, including aerial bombing and covert "commando" style operations, against the people of Iraq, a small Middle-Eastern country.

There is also overwhelming evidence which proves that this government is responsible for a recent wave of fanatical attacks on democracy and civil liberties, enacting legislation which allows the Army to shoot Australian citizens, and gives ASIO the power to detain indefinitely, without the right to silence or independent legal representation, anyone "suspected" of "terrorism".

But we can all work together to preserve peace and our way of life. If you see a Prime Minister or government behaving suspiciously, for example, advocating racial hatred and murderous violence against other human beings, ring up and dob him in.



National Security Hotline 1800 123 400

'THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL'

WHAT ARE THE BEST TACTICS FOR WOMEN TO PURSUE FOR EQUAL TREATMENT AND RESPECT?

OR

HOW ANARCHA-FEMINISM CAN SAVE THE WORLD...

Ada Conroy

Introduction

Emma Goldman defines anarchy as 'the philosophy of a new social order based on liberty unrestricted by man-made law; the theory that all forms of government rest on violence, and are therefore wrong and harmful, as well as unnecessary.' (Falk, 1990, p.1) Anarchist women in the 19th Century found that this definition offered them a way out of the 'gender trap' (Falk, 1990, p.1) that maintained the gendered division of labour and a sanctification of women's roles of domesticity. What anarchist women wanted to do was transcend social norms and expectations in order to create for themselves meaningful and independent lives. Anarchist women believed that political and legal rights would not secure equality, and instead questioned the traditional ideas of womanhood and insisted that the root of women's subordinated place in society is in the system of sexual and familial relationships. Anarchist women argued that only by eradicating the nuclear family could women's inequality be truly addressed and abolished. The rejection of marriage and the nuclear family alienated anarchist women from a society that believed that the family was a haven from a threatening and

changing industrial society (Marsh, 1981, p. 63). They persisted with their struggle, rejecting convention and conformity.

Anarchist women aimed to transcend the norms of society and its gendered division of labour in order to provide a more fulfilling and meaningful life, one that would require radically different social roles for women. They maintained that if we are to create a society based on equality, differences in roles must not be based on gender, but on preference and capacity. It was important to anarchist women to gain a strong connection with others, to work together collectively to achieve effective social change.

Anarcha-feminism, developed during the last decades of the 19th Century uses anarchist theory to address the specific issues faced by women. Many anarchist women found that the existing anarchist movement was inadequate in addressing the specific problems they found themselves confronted with. Women developed a sense of community, often claiming that while women and men worked together in the struggle, men were always the leaders and women, the followers (Ackelsberg, 1991, p. 88). Political campaigns, such as *Mujeres Libres* (Free Women of Spain) took the philosophy of anarcha-feminism into practice and created a revolution.

What are best tactics for women to pursue in their search for equal treatment and respect? In accordance with anarcha-feminist theory, my claim is that in the search for equality, we must first acknowledge and address the root of women's subordination, which we will find in the sexual division of labour, in both the private and public sphere. In support of my claim, I will draw on the philosophies of Emma Goldman, arguably the most influential anarcha-feminist in herstory. I will also outline the ideas of other prominent anarcha-feminist Voltairine De Cleyre. In further support of anarcha-feminist ideas and actions, I will use the example of the *Mujeres Libres*, an anarcha-feminist revolution in Spain in the 1930s. *Mujeres Libres* acknowledged that while women and men fought along side each other, this equality did not carry over into domestic and intimate relationships. *Mujeres Libres* carried with them the political ideals of anarcha-feminism in setting up education collectives, health networks and apprenticeship classes in cooperation with anarchist unions (www.flag.blackened.net).

Anarcha-feminist philosophy

Anarchism appeared in the late 19th century as a response to the social and economic changes resulting from a centralised, industrialised society. Anarchists rejected the onset of technologies and chose instead to discover 'the elemental forces of the human spirit rather than... mastering the machine' (Marsh, 1981, p.15). True anarchism believes that the state is an obstacle to liberty and vehemently opposes any form of non-voluntary authority. Pierre Joseph Proudhon, a French printer who was seen by anarchists as their 'intellectual father' (Marsh, 1981, p.10), believed that we could achieve economic autonomy if we were left to work out our individual needs with each other. He developed a system that abolished government and placed importance on economic equality. However, he viewed women conventionally, stating that the nuclear, or patriarchal family would be central in this reformed society. In this light, without a feminist analysis, anarchist theory is 'patriarchal half-anarchism and not real anarchism' (www.powertech.no/anarchy/mafhtml). Essentially, there is no anarchism without feminism.

According to the *Manifeste Anarchofeministe* (Anarcha-feminist [Wo]Manifesto) (www.12owertecb-no/anarchy/mafhtml), women suffer from two types of oppression. The first is the general oppression that the people face, and the second is oppression and discrimination based on gender, that is, sexism. According to this [wo]manifesto, oppression can be broken down into 5 main areas:

1. Ideological Oppression. The [wo]manifesto states that we are brainwashed by certain cultural traditions, religion, advertising.
2. State Oppression. This is defined by anarcha-feminists as 'hierarchical forms of organisation with command lines downwards from the top in most interpersonal relations.' <www.powertech.no/anarchy-Zmafhtml>
3. Economic exploitation. Anarcha-feminism maintains that we are repressed and exploited as consumers, workers (in low paying 'women's' jobs), and in the home.

4. Violence. Under the sanction of society, in both public and private sphere. Anarcha-feminists, argue that this is both direct (physical and sexual violence) and indirect (coercion due to lack of alternatives, options and resources).
5. Tyranny of the Structurelessness. Lack of organisation that removes responsibility and creates idleness and weakness.

It is argued that these factors work together to contribute to women's oppression. Anarcha-feminists believe that because of the double oppression that women face, they need to organise within both feminist collectives and anarchist unions. The morph of anarchy and feminism is the result of this need. Anarcha-feminists have specific demands in order to achieve change:

1. Women must have control of their reproductive selves. Matters of contraception, conception, childbirth and abortion are women's affairs.
2. That women must work collectively and independently to gain autonomy and economic independence from men. Women must control themselves.
3. The nuclear, or patriarchal family must be abolished and replaced with 'free associations between men and women based on [an] equal right to decide for both parts and with respect for the individual person's autonomy and integrity.' (www.powertech.no/anarchy-Zmafhtml)
4. Women's services that address the needs of victim/ survivors of violence, free 24 hour child care centres, discussion groups and women's culture activities should be developed and run by women.
5. The gendered division of paid labour must be abolished. More part-time work should be introduced so child-rearing responsibilities can be shared equally between women and men.
6. Anarcha-feminists believe that a female president or prime minister will not advance women in their struggle, but simply replace a patriarchal hierarchy with a feminist one.

Anarcha-feminists argued that 'personal autonomy was an essential component to sexual equality' (Marsh, 1981, p.5) and that legal and political

rights were simply pre-conditions to change. Anarcha-feminist women rejected patriarchal control and governmental authority, they dismissed the theories of male academics and their frustration with sexual inequality allowed them to use an anarchist framework to reject outright any notion of fundamental difference between the sexes. These women refused to accept any treatment or political benefits that would differentiate them from men. They believed that economic self-sustenance would only come about by altering the structure of the nuclear family.

Anarcha-feminists would develop large cooperative households where lovers would either cohabit or live apart. Voltairine De Cleyre stated 'it would destroy the individual "home" with its Waste of force' (Marsh, 1981, p.51) with space for women and men to access private areas when needed. In these communities, women would not be forced to take on a maternal role and parental duties would be dispersed among the community and among those who actively choose to be parents. These women believed that they would have access to greater equality if they had the freedom of autonomy, and did not have to rely on men. In this community setting, shared responsibility and independence would guarantee greater gender equality. The root of this ideal is for women to achieve economic independence through self-support. This utopian ideal would carry over into society and all women would live without oppression.

The Spanish Civic War and *Mujeres Libres*

Through the years of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), anarchists developed a community that allowed them to implement their ideals. These networks consisted of political, cultural and economic organisations and activities. Anarchist women were strongly involved in this movement. The workers in Spain in this time, and in the decade preceding, were experiencing extreme poverty and inequity. Often women would be sold for dowries and they severely lacked independence. When Spain became a Republic in 1931, following years of living under a monarch superseded by the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera (1923-1929) (Ackelsberg, 1991, p. 39), it

lacked a strong leadership. The republic, while wanting to diminish the power of the church, the army and landowners, was reluctant to alienate them entirely due to fear of a military coup. When a right wing government took power in 1933 (until 1935), it removed the power restrictions on the church, army and landowners and moved to institute restrictions on leftist activity. In February 1936, elections saw another government whose platform was to move towards stronger equality. These years of tenuous government polarised the country, and in July of 1936, Generals Franco, Mola, Quiapo de Llano and Goded led a military coup. At this time, people took to the streets against the coup, heavily armed with whatever weapons were at hand. In the months that followed, anarchists used their networks and communities to pool collective resources and rebuild their society. Soon, millions of people were living on shared land in a collective, non-hierarchical setting (Ackelsberg, 1991, p. 39).

Anarchist women were largely active throughout this time, taking part in



the fight against the coup and indeed in the building of communities. However, the anarchist movement was still run by men and analysis of women's role, carried out by men, lacked understanding of how a woman's domestic role would inhibit her from further activity. Women in this movement believed that 'sexual struggle could not be separated from class struggle

or from the anarchist project as a whole.' (Ackelsberg, 1991, p. 91) Further, women acknowledged at this time that the egalitarian ideal did not carry over into intimate relationships and many women were still fulfilling traditional housekeeping roles. In anarchist terms, this could be related back to Proudhonian acceptance of women's roles as women's contribution to anarchist struggle was barely recognised. Out of this acknowledgment grew frustration. Anarchist women believed that genderine qualities were a result of social conditioning and that the only way to end male domination was to

end all domination.

In 1936, groups of anarchist women from Madrid and Barcelona came together and formed *Mujeres Liberes* (Free Women). They mobilised over 30,000 women and developed activities throughout their networks created to empower and educate women to fulfill their unique individuality. The aim of *Mujeres Libres* was to develop a connection with other women, to contextualise and challenge women's subordination and to emancipate themselves through their own struggle.

Mujeres Liberes had a two-pronged strategy:

1. Preparation
2. Incorporation

They worked hard to set up literacy programs, technology classes, social studies classes, and apprenticeship classes in cooperation with anarchist unions, in order to achieve women's entry into the workplace. They also supplied food and community dining rooms for the militias, they set up shooting ranges and target practice for women wanting to fight in the war. They organised a school for nurses, which provided emergency medical care for those injured in the fighting. They set up childcare collectives so women could be more involved in union activities and in Barcelona, they set up a hospital for women that provided pre and post natal care, as well as classes on child and maternal health, birth control and sexuality.

Research conducted by political and feminist theorist, Martha Ackelsberg, showed that the *Mujeres Liberes* movement changed women's lives dramatically. They achieved personal and collective empowerment and believed that what they achieved could stand as a bench mark for others. They stated that not only had revolution been a dream, it had been achieved. The movement allowed its participants to experience a strong community and attempted to create a worldview where women would be treated equally to men, while at the same time respecting their differences. Anarchist women were quick to point out the hypocrisy of anarchist men in their views of women. While they enjoyed the notion of an emancipated woman, it did not benefit them. *Mujeres Liberes*, 30,000 strong, challenged this attitude and was

successful in demonstrating the possibility of empowerment and emancipation.

Emma Goldman

Emma Goldman, a Lithuanian born American immigrant is arguably the most well known anarcha-feminist. Known as the ‘Anarchist Queen’ (Falk, 1990, p 1), Goldman was introduced to anarchism four years after her arrival to America, when four anarchists were blamed for the Haymarket Bombings. Goldman fought hard for many things — including birth control — in a movement that largely supported the theories of Proudhon. She had been a prominent union activist and advocated strongly for the eight-hour working day, when 12 hours was the norm. She fought for gay rights, women’s rights, and advocated for free love, believing that each ‘person would have to

‘KNOWN AS THE
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FOR MANY THINGS...
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FREE LOVE...’

confront societal norms, the hypocrisy and injustices that inhibit freedom.’ (Falk, 1990, p 76). Further, she likened the institution of marriage to ‘that other paternal arrangement — capitalism.’ (Falk, 1990, p 76). Goldman toured the Americas, lecturing, writing and agitating. She was imprisoned six times between 1893 and 1921, with charges ranging from incitement to riot, to advocating for contraception, to opposition to WWI. In addition,

Goldman was blamed for the assassination of President McKinley in 1901, and was forced into exile. She was deported from America, Holland, France. She edited an anarcha-feminist magazine called *Mother Earth* and wrote and published many books, including her own autobiography. She died in 1904. She was then admitted back into America to be buried near the sight of the Haymarket Bombings.

Voltaireine de Cleyre

Emma Goldman claimed that Voltairine De Cleyre ‘was the most brilliant and gifted anarchist woman America produced’ (www.infoshop.org). De Cleyre suggested that anarchists should feel, rather than think their way into anarchism. This emotional outlook would allow ‘the individual [to become] free; even if political, economic and social systems remained unchanged.’ (Marsh, 1981, p. 102) De Cleyre would join or organise public meetings in order to debate anarchism with other like-minded individuals. In 1890, she founded the Women’s National Liberal Union. In 1893, she became the organiser of the Philadelphia Ladies Liberal League. She was a frequent public speaker even though she suffered from a disease of the nervous system, which forced her to be bed ridden for days after public appearances. De Cleyre inaugurated the Radical Library, an organisation made up of her anarchist circle. She worked closely with Russian Jewish activists, whom she turned onto anarchism. Her three most prolific essays were ‘The Making of an Anarchist’ (published in 1903), ‘Anarchism and American Traditions’ (published in 1908) and ‘The Dominant Idea’ (published in 1910).

De Cleyre was convinced that an anarchist ideal was attainable.

However, in ‘The Making of an Anarchist’ she asked: ‘Is it possible it stir men from their indifference?’ (Marsh, 1981, p. 141).

De Cleyre believed that anarchism safeguarded individuals rights. She believed that it could reform lives, but the complacency of the people made it easy for a government to be corrupt when ‘nine hundred and ninety-nine men out of a thousand are more interested in drinking... beer than in

‘DE CLEYRE SUGGESTED THAT ANARCHISTS SHOULD FEEL, RATHER THAN THINK THEIR WAY INTO ANARCHISM. THIS EMOTIONAL OUTLOOK WOULD ALLOW “THE INDIVIDUAL [TO BECOME] FREE; EVEN IF POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS REMAINED UNCHANGED”.’

questioning the tax that is laid on it.' (Marsh, 1981, p. 141).

She recovered from an assassination attempt and in 1908 was arrested for inciting riot and acquitted. She died in 1911 due to complications after an ear operation.

Contraversies

Anarcha-feminism achieved little attention from mainstream feminists and its ideology was somewhat contained within the anarchist movement (Marsh, 1982, p. 62). Feminism at this point in history was becoming increasingly conventional, and anarcha-feminism was seen as radical by comparison. A negative public view of anarchism may be why anarcha-feminism achieved insufficient impact. Anarchism achieved a bad reputation in May, 1886, when anarchists were blamed for the Haymarket Bombing, where a bomb was thrown into a group of police officers during a demonstration. The anarchists that were blamed for this were not necessarily the perpetrators of this crime, but were charged for being anarchists, and therefore responsible for inciting terrorism. No one ever took credit for this violent act, but the men arrested were sentenced to the death penalty and life imprisonment. Because anarchists reject the state and all non-voluntary authority, and anarcha-feminists reject the conventions placed upon them because of their gender, they were ideal scapegoats who could be blamed for any societal disturbance.

Anarcha-Feminism and other feminisms' conflict

Contemporary feminists have since adopted the theory that familial and sexual relationships are one of the greatest contributions to the oppression of women, after recognising the failings of the legal and political systems to safeguard women's rights. While women were fighting for suffrage, anarcha-feminists found the idea difficult. Goldman stated that 'Suffrage is evil... it has only helped to enslave people... it has but closed their eyes that they may not see how craftily they were made to submit. (Marsh, 1981, p. 59). De Cleyre said that 'the ballot hasn't made men free and it won't make us free (Marsh, 1981, p. 59). Anarcha-feminists and mainstream feminists were

polarised on this issue, and the result was that anarcho-feminists did not participate in the broader feminist movement.

Conclusion

The anarcho-feminist analysis of women's subordination states that the root of women's oppression lies in the nuclear family. De Cleyre stated that 'every married woman... is a bonded slave, who takes her master's name, her master's bread, and serves her master's passion; [and] who passes through the ordeal of pregnancy and the throes of travail at his dictation.' (Marsh, 1981, p. 77). If this is true, then surely the best tactics for women to pursue in their search for equality would be to challenge the foundations of the nuclear family. Self support and autonomy, education and collective networks are proven ways that women work to emancipate themselves. Anarcho-feminists transcend social norms in order to create more meaningful lives for themselves, to build collectives, to learn and teach, to empower themselves through participation. Ideas and action cannot be separated. It takes acknowledgment of oppression and energy for change to make things happen. *Mujeres Libres'* experience of anarcho-feminist revolution could teach contemporary feminists many things. If we were looking for ways to access our rights, we must first abolish hierarchy and domination. We can only do that by destroying the base of oppression.



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NEWCASTLE 2003

NOW SHOWING

Lou Smith and Tom Civil

Empty adj. *Containing nothing (house, unoccupied, unfurnished)*

The city's perpetual hum, a myriad of human voices, lulls me into step. I drift along, riding the wave of the Swanston St rush. If I lose my footing the drift net of daily routine will catch me.

On the corner where I stop to watch the virtual drummers, I see him pass. Not expecting it, I have an urgent curiosity to follow; to map his exploration and discover his destination. The devil on my shoulder tells me to stay put or go back to work but I start walking, dodging piss-smelling men and teenage girls wearing the trademark of mass-marketed beauty:

Please, I don't need this bombardment, these blood caked hands embrace. Every dying day they need us, cutting throats for convenience. It has been suggested that I open my mouth and swallow without even chewing the shit. It has been suggested that I swallow their words and vomit them up. It has been suggested that my will lay broken and my hopes lie forever in their hands. It has been suggested that I become sidetracked from ever knowing myself. Assigned ideologies, it's time to take back our hearts and minds. We are not carbon copies. Revolution starts on the inside. My ideals are not stagnant, they are in motion.

'Human Life is Business Interest', Conation.

He is fast. He sidesteps shades of grey suits without hesitation. I nearly lose sight of him once or twice as I become stuck behind slow-moving groups blocking me lengthways across the footpath, but luckily for me I am short and can manoeuvre under the shoulders of workers and tourists.

We cut down a laneway, one not very well worn but still hosting the collected works of a stencilling genius. This lane leads to more, branching out in tufts and bursts; arterial networks of mass movement. He walks hunched, as though searching for something extremely important at ground level, as though this laneway holds hidden stories:

People in Melbourne often don't look up enough. In fact, we sometimes make a point of only looking around us. The verandah, that cherished symbol of local vernacular, has truncated our line of vision and blinkered our urban experience to focus on the ground level, often at the expense of the elaborate histories which are detailed on the facades that tower silently above. At least we don't get wet. Or maybe the ground level really is the most interesting aspect of the city, for it is here where Melbourne's iconic grid has most resonance. It is certainly at ground level where the grid starts to unravel into a surreptitious network of alleys and laneways. You never know what hidden pockets may lie around the corner. But one thing is certain, if you focus on the ground level, you don't notice the scientologists jogging on the roof.

Christos Kastaniotis

And then he stops. Looks left. Looks right.

Enters.

And I follow tracking his movements, lost inside the skeletal system of a building dispossessed.

Around corners, along wall-edges I sneak, spun-out at the layers of colours affronting my senses in visual decadence.

It's beautiful, my words hover heavy on freshly sprayed air...

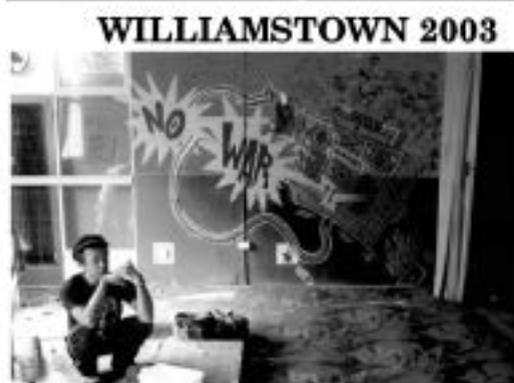
And then it happens. A drawing of the city, detailed and magical, appears on the wall up ahead. He's standing, calmly and meticulously texturing his way over bumps and grooves of roughly worn concrete and chipped paint. The paths I have just walked stretch out before me in an elaborate map of laneways and high-rises. My vision follows the simulated architecture higher and higher till it reaches the tip of the Rialto. Here on this wall every crevice I have mentally marked appears before me, replicated in its entirety. I am awestruck! I shut my eyes and breathe.

His texta squeaks:

I think the most radical thought/material contemporary to our planet is noise. & by noise I mean all kinds of noise; architectural noise, paint noise, sculptural noise, behavioural noise, idea noise, graffiti noise, language noise, xerox noise, psychic noise, computer noise... wholly unleashed on the unsuspecting, noise is not a candy, a suppressant, but given its viable ability to cauterise the unknown & the overly



WILLIAMSTOWN 2003



emoted sense of being, noise can be the missing pill of proximity. Taken readily with frequency there is eventual clarity amid the chaos.

Amendant Hardiker and Miekal And

The Empty Show/s

Williamstown

Williamstown was a swag of Melbourne street artists-stencillers, posterers and muralists. Housed in Brittanica, an abandoned pub nestled in a block owned by the Department of Defence, searchin' found that the Brittanica's owners are Tenix Defence Ltd, the company responsible for building guided missile frigates for the Royal Australian Navy; those also a part of Howard's Fortress Australia Policy.

Williamstown was in a way the spark, the ignition, for the year ahead. The idea for a squatted exhibition was maybe an old idea, but it happened in Williamstown in a way many of us hadn't seen before; artists and activists working together to create a space free from authority and governance; individuals seeking freedom from within the constraints of the city- coming together to share an experience. If only open to the public for an hour, the show brought people together, and showed how things can be different.

The Empty Show idea loosely arised from the exciting squatted social centre movement, and the exploding street art scene in Melbourne which were both happening at the time. It is about reclaiming space, and about bringing life to dead, long-forgotten spaces in the urban.

The idea was exciting because it gave a name, a concept, to what was already happening. Graff and street artists have always been working/ playing in these dead places: abandoned warehouses, car parks and street corners. The only difference being that this time we were organising together and telling people a time, so a critical mass of people could come and check out the space simultaneously. It acted as a meeting place for many people, and many projects have sprung from these friendships.

The Williamstown Empty Show was documented so beautifully through the website, and the people who attended seemed so stoked, that word spread quickly. Heaps of people had heard about it and people were keen to organise their own.

Canterbury

The Canterbury Empty Show was in a huge old reception centre with moving walls and a pretty dark feel. The works were big and impressive. There was almost a competitive feeling about as there were around 20 artists working in the space at the same time — the stencil work was getting bigger and bigger.

Before the show had even opened, the police came and caught one unsuspecting artist in the act. They acted in a very threatening way and tore most of his stencils up and took a shit load of paint that was still in the building. They carried on, tearing pictures off the wall, smashing an aluminium ladder to pieces, and were quoted, ‘What you got against the army? If it wasn’t for the army we’d be all speaking Asian and living under a different regime.’ This was in furious reference to a stencil which proclaimed: DEFEND DEMOCRACY— The combination of the corporation, the military and the complete investiture of the flag with mass spectator sports has set up a pre-fascist atmosphere.

The police had no idea what was going on and were very suspicious of the fact that <silentarmy.com> was written everywhere, and that some of their literature was scattered about. This, like everything else, they proceeded to tear up, quizzing the poor innocent stencil artist about this as well. Hopefully they will have this dangerous bunch of comic artists under control soon!

They also forced two other stencil artists to tear up their collected works later that evening. This act gave an interesting feeling to the event. This showed the reality of the police force and their total ambivalence towards creativity, as well as their brutal force in protecting property. It brought a



NEWCASTLE 2003

stronger sense of community and loyalty to those involved, and instigated a fresh sense of dialogue. Opinions were also heard from people who had otherwise been quietly un-opinionated on the issues of illegal anonymous public art.

Canberra

A crew in Canberra put out a call to come to Canberra to play in an old building they had suss'd. Artists car pooled from Sydney and Melbourne and who knows from where else? The show had a different feel to the Melbourne shows, with the first notable difference being the total lack of cameras on the night. There was a diverse collection of work, with many people working closely with the space making collages of found objects from the old arts building. There were sound installations, video projections and electro jams that went into the night. It was a party. We hung out, and talked, and drank, and talked. People jammed on acoustic instruments as they strolled through the building, candle-lit in the Canberra cold.

Newcastle

In the first week of October Newcastle was the focus of diverse and autonomously organised reclamations of urban space under the name PUBLIC LIABILITY. It involved stencillers, anarchists, pirate broadcasters, posterers, street colourers, installation artists etc.

Public Liability held two empty shows in

The Empty Show/s will continue to live on as more and more people embrace the concept of using public space and 'abandoned' buildings for artistic reclamations.

The Empty Show is an idea that is spreading to other like-minded individuals and collective thinkers.

Insert your own Empty Show here:

<www.anonart.org>

<www.theemptyshow.org>

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Raggat and Christos Kastaniotis eds.,

Subaud. Melbourne: Diretribe Studios, 2003.

Newcastle. One in a huge old inner city shopping arcade and office block. The other, in a small inner-city house consumed by ivy and neighbouring terraces.

In the larger building, amidst rubble and broken glass, one room was completely cleaned and lit with candles enclosed in found retro objects. These led you through a maze to a hidden darkroom completely black except for tealights; in another room two characters hid behind a brick wall back-lit with candles. A train track that was painted on the floor, disappeared into tunnels postered on either side of the room.

Posters, stencils, paintings, charcoal-smudged life-drawings, 3D graff pieces, poster collages, and installation work using found objects covered much of the four or so floors.

The second space, the house, was decorated with stencils, posters and graff and some found-weird-shit installations as well. It was bombed with pictures of robots, large, beautiful paintings of animals and pets, and even huge stencils of the face of an infamous Newcastle character. The street-facing, cracked, six-pane windows were stencilled with images of girls holding spray-cans aimed right at ya, and the statement 'vandal!'



YOUNG PEOPLE AGAINST HEAVY METAL T-SHIRTS (YPAHMTS)

Craig Garrett

The media is one of the most influential of all the institutions in our society. It influences so many other institutions that its impact can not be under estimated. For instance, question time in parliament is littered with questions that stem from reports in the media, mandatory sentencing laws in the Northern Territory are partly due to media reports about ‘gangs’ of youths marauding through the streets, schools now use hidden camera technology (perfected by *A Current Affair*) to monitor students while in the toilets and people’s lives can be ruined by one false claim made by a media ‘personality’. I fear we often choose to forget about the institutions that surround us (especially the media) because we fear them — don’t. Actively seek alternative information and news sources, search for books, radio shows, websites and magazines that contain information that stretches your imagination and makes you question your own knowledge. Be critical, ask questions and don’t take current social structures and institutions for granted. As John Ralston Saul suggests, ‘a good citizen is a critical citizen’. A number of years ago I met Matthew Thompson (a self-confessed mischief-maker) who is very critical of what the media does, the way it does it and what it stands for. He is critical of its lack of research and its inability to detect bullshit from genuine news and information. This is his story:

In 1992, while Matthew was listening to Alan Jones blame offensive band names for the woes of young people and for society’s ills in general, he became frustrated with the crap that was being broadcast over the airwaves, so he decided to pull a prank.

Matthew, then 21, wrote letters to a number of newspapers outlining an extreme stance against offensive t-shirts by creating a mythical group: Young People Against Heavy Metal t-shirts (YPAHMTS), with himself as leader. He posted the letters believing no newspaper would publish them.

The first letter was published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. In part it said: ‘...I wish to make it known that not all young people are elderly-hating, drug-

taking louts... many young people have shown remarkable responsibility towards the environment and now it is time to clean themselves up... This means stopping socially and personally damaging activities such as drinking, swearing, taking drugs and wearing heavy metal t-shirts... Heavy metal t-shirts are an affront to the elderly, who are our ancestors and the forebears of our society.'

A number of media outlets picked up the story and within days Matthew received interview offers from *Good Morning Australia*, *Hinch*, Triple J and *Couchman*. The *TeleMirror*, *People Magazine*, 2BL and 2RR were also interested in the story.

As the hoax grew, more and more people were sucked in. The *TeleMirror* 'found' another group opposed to YPAHMTS. People wrote to newspapers,

'IT'S ALL ABOUT
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KNOW, FOR A HEALTHY
SOCIETY.'

some praised his efforts, while one other condemned him as '...more dangerous to our society than the people you are trying to persecute'. A Sydney heavy metal magazine even awarded him their 'loser of the week' award.

Matthew was eventually interviewed on *Hinch*, *Couchman*, Triple J and 2RR. Each of the programs fed off each other, none really did any research, apart from reading, watching or listening to other media reports. 'They didn't seem to want to know the truth,' Matthew

observed. 'They were more interested in creating their own agenda.'

During these interviews Matthew attempted to explain his point of view—he was ignored. When he realised this he decided to have some fun. 'While taping *Hinch*,' Matthew explains. 'I outlined a fairly "extreme" idea about how kids can attend camps in the desert run by YPAHMTS. I said the kids would only be allowed to wear plain T-shirts, listen to music that we (YPAHMTS) supplied and read material we gave them. They would be totally cut off from the "deviant influences" that heavy metal t-shirts

represent.' These parts of the interview were cut from the final edit which focused on the narrow media-created agenda: banning offensive, heavy metal t-shirts.

Matthew's stance that heavy metal t-shirts are offensive, was conveniently changed by the media into a stance calling for the banning of all offensive t-shirts. At no stage did Matthew ever mention banning, he just advocated choice, stating 'if you want to wear an offensive t-shirt, make it yourself, rather than paying money to advertise a multinational company.'

Matthew found it difficult to keep from laughing while being interviewed by the 'serious media'. 'I played the part as head of YPAHMTS on the side of lunacy... I saw the interviews as an opportunity to cut through the crap and try to provoke people... It was hard to keep a straight face.'

The media never delved deeper than the superficial. Something which Matthew partially expected. What he didn't expect or predict was the audience reaction. '...I got right against the media for a while, when I was doing

it [the hoax], then the audience started to really annoy me because they were acting just like the media... no one was pausing to think. I found that if a person presents as an "expert" about an issue the media and the audience are more likely to believe whatever that person is saying. I gained credibility because I had an organisation behind me. The fact that the organisation didn't exist escaped everyone. I was never asked to produce evidence the group existed, nor was I asked to back up or justify anything I was saying, the media and the audience simply reacted to my words.'

He began trying to get people to question what they do, how they dress, and what they think. I wanted the audience to question the media, the message and YPAHMTS so they would look deeper into issues and events

'I PLAYED THE PART AS HEAD OF YPAHMTS ON THE SIDE OF LUNACY... I SAW THE INTERVIEWS AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CUT THROUGH THE CRAP AND TRY TO PROVOKE PEOPLE... IT WAS HARD TO KEEP A STRAIGHT FACE.'

portrayed by the media, but nobody questioned me or tried to understand what I was saying. The media skimmed over the issue and instead of questioning my validity, they asked me how many people were in the group, did I plan to get into politics and what was my next move? All the audience did was react to what they were fed.'

It frustrated Matthew that people could be so narrow minded and willing to believe anything—especially considering the original letters were a joke. 'I decided to expose the hoax to show people that the media is not factual... those who had been taken in had to know they'd been swindled. At this point it became vital for me to turn the insides of the hoax out so that people would understand they had been taken for a ride.'

In 1995 Matthew wrote an exposé titled 'Tabloid Whore' and sent it to *The Independent Monthly* Young Writer of the Year Competition. It won second prize, but was disqualified because he wrote under a pseudonym and interviewed himself. 'I argued that it was not fiction because it actually happened, and *The Independent Monthly* argued that it was not fact either, so they could not give me the award.' The next year he rewrote the article and sent it in again, and for the second time he won second prize, but before it could be published the magazine went broke.

In 1996 Matthew then sent 'Tabloid Whore' to *Matix Watch* in the hope they could give him a few ideas about where to get it published. They wrote back asking if he had any videos of the interviews because they would like to produce a segment about media pranks. He sent them the footage and the hoax was exposed on national television.

If nothing else, Matthew Thompson's hoax taught us to dispute what we see, hear and read. It exposed the effectiveness of the media as a propaganda machine, it revealed the inadequacies of the media to watch the watchers and act as the fourth estate, it highlighted the naivety of the audience as media-consumers, it showed how the audience has become passive, relying on the media to spoon-feed it information, it reminded us all to keep on questioning and most importantly it should inspire all of us to 'stir up trouble, you know, for a healthy society.'



COMMERCIAL TELEVISION AUSTRALIA (CTVA)

Advertiser Code of Ethics

This Code has been adopted by the Australian Association of National Advertisers to be applied as a means of advertising self-regulation in Australia and is intended to be applied to all forms of advertising. The object of this Code is to ensure that advertisements are legal, decent, honest and truthful and that they have been prepared with a sense of obligation to the consumer and society and fair sense of responsibility to competitors.

In this Code, the term 'advertisement' shall mean matter which is published or broadcast in all of Australia or in a substantial section of Australia for payment or other valuable consideration and which draws the attention of the public, or a segment of it, to a product, service, person, organisation or line of conduct in a manner calculated to promote or oppose directly or indirectly that product, service, person, organisation or line of conduct.

CAD provides classification and information services to advertisers, agencies and production houses in relation to television commercials.

Television Australia may be contacted via the following means:

Telephone: (02) 8968-7100

Fax: (02) 9969-3520

Advertising Code of Conduct

Advertisements shall comply with Commonwealth law and the law of the relevant state or territory.

Advertisements shall not be misleading or deceptive or be likely to mislead or deceive. Advertisements shall not contain a misrepresentation that is likely to cause damage to the business or goodwill of a competitor.

Advertisements shall not exploit community concerns in relation to protecting the environment by presenting or portraying distinctions in products or services advertised in a misleading way or in a way that implies a benefit to the environment which the product or services do not have.

Advertisements shall not make claims about the Australian origin or content of products advertised in a manner which is misleading.

Advertisements shall not portray people in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of race, ethnicity, nationality, sex, age, sexual preference, religion, disability or political belief.

Advertisements shall not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised. Advertisements shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience and, where appropriate, the relevant program time zone.

Address: 44 Avenue Road
 Mosman NSW 2088
 AUSTRALIA
 Email: Australian Commercial Television
 <ctva@ctva.com.au>
 CTVADigital Television
 <digitaltv@ctva.com.au>
 CTVAEngineering <engineering@ctva.com.au>
 CTVALegal & Broadcasting Policy
 <policy@ctva.com.au>
 CTVAMarketing <marketing@ctva.com.au>

Commercials Advice may be contacted via the following means:

Telephone: (02) 8968-7200
 Fax: (02) 9969 8147
 Address: 44 Avenue Road
 Mosman NSW 2088
 AUSTRALIA
 Email: <cad@commercialsadvice.com.au>

The following organisations may be of interest to those seeking information relating to the Australian media.

AdNews
 17-21 Bellevue Street
 Surry Hills NSW 2010
 Telephone: (02) 9281-2336
 Fax: (02) 9281-2750
 Marketing, media and advertising magazine.

Advertising Federation of Australia Limited

Level 1

201 Miller Street

North Sydney NSW 2060

Telephone: (02) 9957-3077

Fax: (02) 9957-3952

Representing companies in advertising and marketing communications to industry, government, media and the public.

Advertising Standards Bureau

Level 2

97 Northbourne Ave

Turner ACT 2612

Telephone: (02) 6262-9822

Fax: (02) 6262-9833

Considers written complaints about most forms of published or broadcasting advertising, which people find offensive, with reference to the Code of Ethics prescribed by the Australian Association of National Advertisers

Advertisements for any product which is meant to be used by or purchased by children shall not contain anything which is likely to cause alarm or distress to those children.

Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union

PO Box 1164

Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia

Telephone: (60-3) 2282-3108

Fax: (60-3) 2282-2480

The ABU is an association of the television and radio networks in the Asia-Pacific region, existing to help develop broadcasting in the region, organise joint activities among its members and provide them with services

Advertisements shall only use language which is appropriate in the circumstances and strong or obscene language shall be avoided.

Advertisements shall not depict material contrary to prevailing community standards on health and safety.

ATRAustralia

166 Epping Road
 LANE COVE NSW 2066
 Telephone: (02) 9490-6500
 Fax: (02) 9490-6599

The Australian member of the AGB Group, the largest provider of television audience measurement services in the world.

Australian Association of National Advertisers

Suite 2, Level 5
 99 Elizabeth Street
 Sydney NSW 2000
 Telephone: (02) 9221-8088
 Fax: (02) 9221-8077

Represents the advertising community on matters of significance with the primary objective to safeguard advertisers rights to "freedom of commercial communication".

Australian Broadcasting Authority

PO Box Q500
 Queen Victoria Building
 NSW 2000
 Telephone: (02) 9334-7700
 Fax: (02) 9334-7799

Responsible for regulating television, radio and the internet.

Australian Communication Authority

PO Box 70A
 Belconnen ACT 2616
Telephone: (02) 9245-4000

Regulator of radio communications and telecommunications.

Australian Retailers Association

1st Floor
 20 York Street
 Sydney NSW 2000
 Telephone: (02) 9290-3766
 Fax: (02) 9626-1464

Representing the diverse interests of all retailers and a provider of quality information and services to members

Australian Subscription Television & Radio Association

Wharf 8
 Pyrmont NSW 2009
 Telephone: (02) 9200-1494

Industry body for subscription (multichannel) television and narrowcast television and radio

B&T Weekly

Tower Two
 475 Victoria Street

Chatswood NSW 2067

Telephone: (02) 9422-2999

Fax: (02) 9422-2949

Marketing, media & advertising
magazine

Commercial Radio (previously
FARB)

Level 5, 88 Foveaux Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010

Telephone: 02 9281-6577

Fax: 02 9281-6599

Radio advisory body

Department of Communications,
Information Technology & the Arts
GPO Box 2154

Canberra ACT 2601

Telephone: (02) 6271-1000

Fax: (02) 6271-1901

Provide policy advice and program
support to the Australian
Government on arts, information
technology and communications

Digital Broadcasting Australia

Level 18

MLC Centre

19 Martin Place Sydney NSW

Digital Broadcasting Australia
(DBA) has been formed to help
make the transition from analog to
digital television as seamless as
possible for the consumer.

European Broadcasting Union
Case postale 45 Ancienne Route
17A

CH-1218 Grand-Saconnex
Switzerland/ Suisse

Telephone: (+41 22) 717 20 34

Fax: (+41 22) 747 40 34

EBU is the largest professional
association of national broadcasters
in the world. Headquartered in
Geneva, and working on behalf of
its members in the European area

Imparja Television

PO Box 52

ALICE SPRINGS NT 5750

Telephone: (08) 8950-1411

Fax: (08) 8953-0322

Network Ten

1 Saunders Street

PRYMONT NSW 2009

Telephone: (02) 9650-1010

Fax: (02) 9650-1111

Network Ten — Northern NSW

Locked Bag 1000

COFFS HARBOUR NSW 2450

Telephone: (02) 6652-2777

Fax: (02) 6652-3034

Nine Network
24 Artarmon Road
WILLOUGHBY NSW 2068
Telephone: (02) 9906-9999
Fax: (02) 9436-0406

Office of Film and Literature
Classification
Level 1, 255 Elizabeth Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Telephone: (02) 9581-7000
Fax: (02) 9581-7001
Responsible for the Classification
of Film, Video, Publications and
Computer Games

Oztam Pty Limited
Level 7
44 Miller Street
North Sydney NSW 2060
Telephone: (02) 9929-7210
Fax: (02) 9929-3445
The official source for metropolitan
television audience ratings data in
Australia.

Prime Television
Level 6, 1 Pacific Highway
NORTH SYDNEY, NSW 2060
Telephone: (02) 9965-7700
Fax: (02) 9965-7729

Regional TV Marketing
6/161 Walker Street
North Sydney NSW 2060
Telephone: (02) 9929-2122
Fax: (02) 9929-2120

Screen Network Australia
c/o Australian Film Commission
GPO Box 3984
SYDNEY NSW 2001
Telephone: (02) 9321-6444
Fax: (02) 9357-3737

Screen Network Australia is the
gateway to the Australian film and
television industry on the internet.
This site is an Australian film
industry initiative, designed to
provide current, quality
information for and about the
industry, for industry professionals
and film fans alike.

Seven Network
Mobbs Lane
EPPING NSW 2121
Telephone: (02) 9877-7777
Fax: (02) 9877-7888

WIN Television
PO Box 1800
WOLLONGONG NSW 2500
Telephone: (02) 4223-4199
Fax: (02) 4223-4190



HOW TO [INTERVIEW YOUR HEROES]

Setting up the interview

I should point out right from the start that this is by no means a foolproof method of setting up interviews with people whose work you admire. In the end, these people may not want to talk to you, for whatever reasons of their own. If they don't wanna, there's nothing you can do. It might also be the case that the people you want to interview are unavailable. In the case of musicians, they might be on tour and out of contact. Other people might be on holiday or away from their place of work for an indefinitely long period of time. But those are the chances you take. Don't let those possibilities discourage you.

Okay, so basically what you need to do is to set up a meeting or a phone conversation. To do this you need to do a little bit of research. In most cases you'll know about the person you want to interview because of something they've done — they've appeared on the news, in the papers, recorded an album, built a web-page, written a book, made a zine, and so on. So the first place to do is to check out the thing that they did and see if there are any contact details on it.

With CDs, there might be a contact address for a fan club in the liner notes somewhere. If there's not, there will most likely be a contact address for the record label that produced the CD. If there isn't there will at least be the name of the company on the CD somewhere, and you will need to look it up in the phone book, or use the Internet to dig it up.

Either or both of these addresses are valuable contact points for the person you want to find. Think of the film *Six Degrees of Separation* and its contention that every person is only six people away from every other person on the planet. Finding the fan club or record label's address is your step along those six degrees.

If we're talking about books, you'll probably have to contact the publisher. If we're talking about someone you read about in the paper, or saw on the telly, you need to contact the paper or the television station and try to speak to the reporter who presented or wrote the story, or perhaps the

publicity department of the station/paper.

It's probably much more helpful to actually speak to someone on the phone. Letters can be ignored. So can emails. Phone calls, however, demand a little more respect and attention. Once you've got an address, you can easily get a phone number from directory assistance. Of course, if you can't get a phone number, then you will have to use either email or snail mail.

The next thing you do is call up the fan club/label/publisher/TV station. If we're talking about a commercial company of some kind, the person who answers the phone will most likely be some kind of receptionist. To deal effectively with receptionists, you need to be as official and professional-sounding as possible.

To help yourself appear professional, it helps to do some planning before you make the call. Generally speaking, people in organisations respond best to people representing other organisations, so it's best to refer to yourself as 'so and so from such and such'. If you want this interview for a zine or a web page, then just use the name of the zine or the web page. If you're doing it purely for yourself, then just make something up. Organisations with the word 'productions' or 'publications' sound impressive and will make the receptionist think twice before blowing you off.

Another good thing to do is to actually write down the questions you are going to ask of the receptionist. Sometimes you can get a little convoluted when you are trying to explain what you want — if you write the questions down you can just read from them and not worry about sounding confused or flustered. You should always sound like the receptionist is supposed to know exactly what you're talking about.

Hi. This is Adam Ford from Ditch Fat Magazine. I was hoping you could help me. We would like to interview David Bowie for the latest issue of our magazine and I hoped that you would be able to tell me who I should speak to.

Something like that usually works. Remember to use the royal 'we'. It makes you sound more important.

The receptionist will usually put you through to 'someone in publicity'

and you will have to explain yourself all over again. This time around it might be an idea to explain a little bit about the magazine or website (whether it be real or not) and what it does. At this point in the journey it's probably better to be as friendly as possible — more conversational than you were when you spoke to the receptionist. It sounds a little corny, but if you know the person's name, try to use it a little bit.

Hi Vanessa. I was ringing to ask about the possibility of interviewing David Bowie for the latest issue of Duck Fat? We publish articles and interviews that are about things like popular culture, interviews with musicians and writers, that kind of thing. Last issue we had interviews with Scott McCloud, who's an American comic artist, also the band TISM, and reviews of a bunch of different CDs and comics.

Now, they might be friendly or they might be suspicious. That's why you need to be as friendly as you can — make them like you and you've got more chance that they might overlook the fact that they only deal with 'important' people like *Rolling Stone* or the daily papers or whatever. But unless there's some kind of snobbery or time constraint (like these people are in the middle of publicity for a new book or a new exhibition and they've only set aside a day to talk to the press), the thing about publicists that should always be kept in mind is that they need to get as much publicity as possible, so if you're ringing them saying 'I'll write good stuff about that thing that you want people to write good stuff about', it's quite likely that they'll be appreciative and help you set it all up. If there is snobbery, well, fuck them.

If you're lucky enough to be able to get onto the person themselves, like if they have a web page with a direct email link, or you're thinking of interviewing a self-publisher/zine/comic maker who put their contact details in the comic/zine/book, then you're more likely to be talking to them directly, in which case things are more likely to go well. Asking someone if they'd like to be interviewed is a big compliment æ most people are more than happy to help in any way. Again, be really polite and nice to these people — you're essentially asking them for a favour. Remember that.

The way the publicists I dealt with when I was writing for street press

used to do things was that they'd set up a time and date that you'd be available, then do the same thing for the interview subject, and then the interviewee would either ring you at that time or you'd meet at a pre-arranged place. You usually got between half an hour and an hour to do the interview. If you're not arranging things through some kind of publicist, you usually have a bit more freedom to arrange things, and also a bit more time to do the interview.

Technical stuff

Once you've got the interview set up, you need some way to record it. This is pretty simple. You don't really need me to tell you that a tape deck with an external microphone and a record button is the way to go. I will say that I don't think you should bother worrying about investing in a recording walkman unless you really want to. An old shitty 80s portable boombox will work just as well. It's best to test it out before you do the interview, though.

With telephone interviews, there's this really nifty gizmo you can buy at almost any Tandy or Dick Smith store for about five bucks. It's a suction-cap microphone that fits onto the back of the ear-piece of the telephone. When you plug it into a microphone jack it records everything clear as day — your voice and the interviewee's. If you're doing the interview by mail or email, you've got all the words already printed out in front of you so you don't need to worry about a thing.

That's about it for the mechanical side of things, except to say remember to punch the lugs out of the top edge of the cassette after you're done, just in case you accidentally hit record when listening back.

The questions

This part of the interview is more up to you than anyone else. You already know the kind of thing that you want to know about your interviewee, the kind of questions you want to ask. But there are some general tips that are useful for preparing and conducting an interview.

If there are earlier interviews with your subject available, it'd be a good idea to give them at least a quick read, just in case some of the questions you

want to ask are already answered in those interviews. Most people who get interviewed on a fairly regular basis tend to get asked the same questions over and over again, and when they answer these questions they might be a little less enthusiastic than when they get asked questions they haven't heard before. So try to eliminate as many of the obvious questions from your list. Previous interviews can also give you some good ideas about questions that you might want to ask them. Check the internet, flip through back issues of your zines and magazines, ask friends if they've got any interviews at their place — just do a general scour for any information you can find.

I usually try to come to an interview with a list of at least ten questions that I want to ask, but there's nothing wrong with not getting to ask all ten questions. Hopefully, if that does happen, it's a sign that you got the subject talking enthusiastically.

It does sometimes help to ask maybe one or two basic background questions to get the interviewee warmed up. Questions like 'how did you get started?', 'how long have you been doing this?' or 'what's your first memory of doing what you do?' can be used to establish a bit of a rapport between you and your subject.

Try to make sure that none of the questions you plan to ask can be answered with a simple yes or no. This way, for the questions to be answered, the subject will have to speak for a longer time, which gives you more time to listen for potential tangents and allows you to steer the conversation in different directions. The best way to avoid asking yes or no questions is to make sure that none of them start with the words 'did', 'do', 'will', 'are', 'is'. Questions that begin with 'what', 'how' and 'why' are pretty good for inspiring longer answers.

Remember to listen closely to what your subject is saying, and keep an eye out for potential conversational tangents. If an answer prompts a follow-up question, then ask that question. And if you think that they haven't quite answered the question, ask it again in a slightly different way. Don't just follow your list of questions from one to ten and then finish up. The best interviews aren't simple question-and-answer sessions. What you're trying

to do is provoke a conversation with your subject. Feel free to share your own anecdotes with the subject if you have any that are similar to what they have been talking about — this can help to inspire a friendlier, more conversational mood and can help to stimulate further conversation — but remember that the point of the exercise is for them to talk and for you to listen.

Writing the bugger up

That's it, really. The rest of the interview process is pretty much up to you — how you present it, how long it's going to be, that sort of thing. The best way to work out how you'll actually write up the interview is to think back to the interviews you've enjoyed reading, and have a look at how they were set out. Some people prefer to write interviews as prose pieces with large quotes from the interviewee thrown in to illustrate something that's been brought up. Others prefer the question-and-answer presentation, which is pretty much just a straight transcript of what was said, by both you and the interviewee. Both approaches have their advantages, but neither one is superior to the other. The prose approach makes it easy to provide background information for the readers, but at times it can feel a little bit contrived. The question-and-answer format has a nice, casual conversational feel, but it can sometimes feel a bit dry, a bit too clinical. Then again, there are no rules that say you can't combine the two approaches into the one article — use whole chunks of Q&A combined with more prosaically-written supplementary info. It's up to you.

The last bit

Once again I'll point out that all the above is simply one person's perspective on the whole interviewing thing. It's not intended as a gospel or anything. If something works for you that I haven't mentioned in this article, by all means go with it. This is only meant as a bit of a starter, a finger pointed in the right direction. Good luck in tracking down your subjects and remember to have fun with the whole process.



INDEPENDENT MEDIA

From *The Melbourne Activists' Cookbook*

The best way to get your message across intact and uncensored is to use the many independent media resources available. Independent media isn't interested in pleasing owners, advertisers or the government. Rather than editing content to make money from advertising or to justify the actions of the government, they are more likely to be interested in telling the truth. Here are some independent media outlets that would be more than happy for you to get in touch with them:

Access News

Access News screens weekly on Channel 31 8pm Mondays. SKA have also produced *Activist Awards*, *Global Insights* and *S11: Melbourne Rising* videos.

Phone : (03) 9663-6976

Suite 85, Trades Hall

Corner Victoria and Lygon Streets

Carlton 3053

<accessnews@skatv.org.au>

Melbourne IndyMedia

Publish your own articles online! Don't hate the media — be the media!

<www.melbourne.indymedia.org>

Dissenterlink

Dissenterlink is a zine produced by the IWW unemployed group. It is funny and informative and provides support and contacts for the unemployed suffering under the maddening oppression and illogic of Centrelink.

<www.iww.org.au>

SCAM Publishing

SCAM publications produce, promote and distribute anarchist literature with a focus on original and local material. Anarchist ideas in all facets of life and labour. <www.xchange.anarki.net/~scam>

Contact: <scam@xchange.anarki.net>

Accessing the student media

The National Student Media Alliance can be reached at:

<<http://users.senet.com.au/~trystero/asmi/index.html>>

This site has an upload facility for people to upload articles, photos, graphics and links to useful websites that student editors from across the country can then download and print. The combined audience of national student media is several million people. It also has a comprehensive list of all the student newspapers/ magazines in the country along with their contact details.

Dealing with corporate or state media at actions

Extreme caution is advised when dealing with the Corporate and State media. There are some excellent and honest journalists, but they are few in number and, due to the institutional structures, it is very difficult for them to articulate alternative view points in any meaningful way.

For those who wish to talk to the corporate/state media here are some basic facts. If you agree to do an interview ask for some time to prepare. You can ask what they are going to ask and use the time to collect your thoughts. Ask for the journalist's name and media organisation and write it down. This will give you more credibility and may make them less likely to take you out of context.

Although some journalists may be sincerely interested in the politics of the event, most are probably more interested in a 'good story' hence their anticipation of violence despite a repeated commitment to non violence. They are more likely to ask questions relating to any possible confrontations. The trick is not to get drawn in to talking about something other than the

reason that you are there.

Try to flip your answer to talk about what you want to talk about and the points that you want to get across. 'The Police have been very aggressive towards us...' It helps if you have a clear idea of what you want to talk about and have a few easy phrases to fall back on. The tv media and some radio will be using very short grabs — think of a succinct way to get your point across.

Letters pages

The Age: <letters@theage.fairfax.com.au>

Access Age (records a 50 word letter to editor): 9670-1601

The Herald Sun: <hsletters@hwtnewfld.com.au>

The Australian: <austletters@newsCorp.com.au>

Fax stream

NSW SBS RADIO (02) 9433-1660

NSW SBS TV (02) 9430-3040

NSW SBS DATELINE (02) 9957-3571

VIC ABC TV NEWS (03) 9524-2712

ABC RADIO MELB (03) 9626-1661

ABC RADIO NATIONAL (03) 9626-1621

ABC JJJ (03) 9626-1707

SBS RADIO (03) 9686-7496

3CR (03) 9417-4472

AAP (03) 9619-9385

The Age news room (03) 9601-2332

Channel 9 (03) 9429-4082

Channel 7 (03) 9697-7899

The Sunday Age (03) 9601-3137

3RRR (03) 9417-1841

FoxFM/3MMM (03) 9525-5621

Good Luck!



ROB A DUB DUB

Nefarious Artists

One of the nicest ways to distribute underground video is to dub onto the end of hired tapes. Just get on down to your local video store and hire the most popular tape of the genre you're detouring (this technique has added impact if your cutup comes from the same movie). Watch the video while dubbing it. Take notes with times where useful scenes occur for further mulching into the cutup compost.

Dub your fab vid thing onto the end of the tape and return tape with the nice little surprise at the end! This method of distribution has distinct advantages: it's controlled by the maker, and doesn't rely on any middle mediators like video festival bureaucrats or cringing tv producers to get the tape out to 'the people'. It's 'illegal', so don't put your contact address at the end. This forced anonymity also brings with it freedom from the cult of the

'... IT'S "ILLEGAL", SO DON'T PUT YOUR CONTACT ADDRESS AT THE END... IT'S A SURPRISE GIFT FROM THE MAKER TO THE VIEWER AND CONSEQUENTLY IS NOT OPERATING AS A COMMODITY...'

creator. You're obviously not doing it for self aggrandisement and so the viewer can simply enjoy the tape for what it is. There's no money involved. It's a surprise gift from the maker to the viewer and consequently is not operating as a commodity. This can help get a more critical viewpoint across to a sceptical audience; they've not

paid for the experience and so bring fewer expectations to it. The viewer is in control of the tape. They can stop, review, copy or erase it. Again, this more equitable relationship between maker and viewer can help to get ideas flowing and is also less authoritarian.

Once you've put a bit of sticky tape over the 'record safe hole' on a hired tape it can be very tempting to actually dub into the middle of the movie itself. Don't. Be respectful of your audience at all times. Yes, they may hold positions you wish to criticise, but they're the other end of the

communication loop and this is a video they've paid for and want to see. You've snuck on stage at the end of the spectacle and have their attention. Don't alienate them now. Once they close their minds to your message the tactical advantage of surprise is gone.

If you have two VCRs always plugged into each other ready for cutup, you can easily do this to every movie you hire out. In a sense, by dubbing at the end of the tape you're not actually interfering with the property of the video hiner and so are more likely to get away with it. Hire from a number of stores to avoid setting up easy patterns to trace through their databases. Remember, the shop has a computer record of who hired the tape. This idea is presented as a self-replicating meme. Pretty soon you'll hire a tape with mischievous intentions and find a cutup surprise already at the end of it!



DREAMS

How to remember your dreams

Remembering your dreams is the starting place for learning to have lucid dreams. If you don't recall your dreams, even if you do have a lucid dream, you won't remember it! And, in order to be able to recognise your dreams as dreams while they are happening, you have to be familiar with the way your own dreams work.

Getting plenty of sleep is the first step to good dream recall. If you are rested it will be easier to focus on recalling dreams and you won't mind so much taking the time during the night to record your dreams. Another benefit of getting plenty of sleep is that dream periods (REM) get longer and closer together as the night proceeds. We all dream every night, about one dream period every 90 minutes. People who say they never dream simply never remember their dreams. You may have more than one dream during a REM period, separated by short arousals that are most often forgotten. It is generally accepted among sleep researchers that dreams are not recalled unless the sleeper awakens directly from the dream, rather than after going on to other stages of sleep.

It can be useful while you are developing your dream recall to keep a complete dream journal. Keep the journal handy by your bed and record every dream you remember, no matter how fragmentary. Start by writing down all your dreams, not just the complete, coherent or interesting ones — even if all you remember is a face or a room, write it down.

When you wake in the night and recall what you were dreaming, record the dream right away. If you don't, in the morning you may find you remember nothing and you will certainly have forgotten many interesting details. We seem to have built-in dream erasers in our minds, which make dream experiences more difficult to recall than waking ones. If you don't feel like writing out a long dream story at 3 am, note down key points of the plot. Also write down the precise content of any dialogue from the dream, because words will almost inevitably be forgotten quickly.

Possibly, all you will need to do to increase your dream recall is to remind yourself as you are falling asleep that you wish to awaken fully from your dreams and remember them. This works in a similar manner to remembering to awaken at a certain time in the morning. Additionally, it may help to tell yourself you will have interesting, meaningful dreams.

A major cause of dream forgetting is interference from other thoughts competing for your attention. Therefore, let your first thought upon awakening be, 'What was I just dreaming?' Before attempting to write down the dream, go over the dream in your mind, re-telling the dream story to yourself. Do not move from the position in which you wake and do not think of the day's concerns. Cling to any clues of what you might have been experiencing — moods, feelings, fragments of images — and try to rebuild a story from them. Try to relive the dream in reverse. If all you remember is a mood, describe it in a journal. Even if you can't recall anything in bed, events or scenes of the day may remind you of something you dreamed the night before. Be ready to notice when this happens and record whatever you remember.

If you find that you sleep too deeply to awaken from your dreams, try setting an alarm clock to wake you at a time when you are likely to be dreaming. Since our REM periods occur at approximately 90 minute intervals, good times will be multiples of 90 minutes after you go to sleep. Aim for the later REM periods by setting the alarm to go off at 4.5, 6, or 7.5 hours after you go to sleep. Once again, when you wake up, don't move and think first of what you were just dreaming before writing.

To remind yourself of your intentions and get yourself into the spirit of your dreams, read through your dream journal at bedtime. Learning to remember your dreams may seem difficult at first, but if you persist, you will almost certainly succeed—and may find yourself remembering four or more dreams per night. Of course, once you reach this level, you probably won't want to write them all down—just the significant or compelling ones. And, the more familiar you become with the style of your own dreams, the easier it will be to remember you are dreaming while you are dreaming—and

explore the world of your dreams while still on the scene.

Dream Machine

Plans

Take an empty bleach bottle (Ajax, etc.), cut off the top conical section and cut a hole in the centre of the bottom. (Alternatively use a piece of black cardboard and fold it into a cylinder.)

Cut three rings of evenly spaced holes (for even spaces of light and dark) in the cylinder/bottle. One ring with 11, one with 12 and one with 13. This gives you different frequencies simultaneously. Put the cylinder on a turntable and suspend a lightbulb in the centre. Turn the turntable and lightbulb on, turn the room light off.

Sit close to the Dreamachine and close your eyes. Move your head around to check out which frequency you hook into.

History

The Dreamachine was invented by Canadian-Islamic poet Brion Gysin and mathematician Ian Sommerville in 1959. Based on Gysin's divinatory use

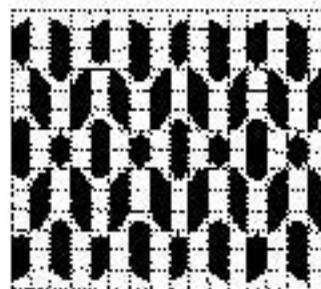
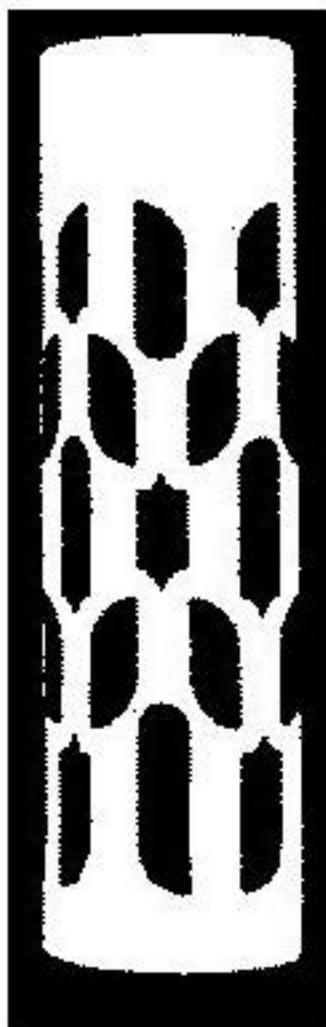


Figure 1.1.1

of Sufic geometry, the motorised lamp relies on the flickering of Ishmaelite archetypes to yield an oracular state in the user. American novelist William S. Burroughs, a devout champion of Hassan I Sabbah ('Nothing is true — everything is permitted') made extensive use of the Dreamachine as a source of inspiration throughout his visionary career.

To properly 'see' or experience the Dreamachine, position your head as closely as possible to its rotating cylinder, eyes closed. Adjust your distance to the machine.

Initially, most users observe something akin to a perpetually metamorphosing Persian rug. Within 10 to 15 minutes, entoptic effects may segue into a series of cinematic images as the brain struggles to find a



semblance of order and familiarity in an apparently endless, abstract visual chaos. During this process, the machine's rate of flicker may induce the subject to enter into a waking, lucid dream state.

Normally, an awake person's brain functions at between 4 and 8 electrical pulses per second (hertz, or hz). However, when the Dreamachine's bright 10 flickers per second strike closed lids, the optic nerve sends a powerful 10 hz pulse signal into the subject's cortical tissue. The high amplitude of this newly introduced frequency defeats the waking brain's normal 4-8 hz (Beta range) operating frequency. Hence, the waking brain is now operating at 10 hz (Alpha range: 8-12 hz), a synapse frequency associated with dreaming.

Users may terminate a Dreamachine experience by simply opening their eyes. View the Dreamachine with moderation and caution...



IS YOUR OFFICE PAPER ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY? (THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY)

Information is correct at date of publication.

Don't use paper that destroys Australia's last forests

An estimated 7.2 million hectares of ancient forest are logged throughout the world each year. The current nature of the logging industry in many countries makes it very difficult to trace the sources of paper and production processes. Irresponsible and illegal practices remain widespread. Many imported office papers from South East Asia come from areas where either plantation establishment or the logging of tropical rainforests has caused human rights abuses and devastating forest fires. If a paper label does not include the country of source, do not buy it. Don't use paper that destroys international forests.

Each day about 100 hectares (equivalent to 55 football fields) of Australia's forests are clear-fell logged. Woodchips for the paper and packaging industry drive the clear felling of these forests. In some areas — Tasmania, parts of Southern NSW and East Gippsland in Victoria — 80% of trees removed are woodchipped. Australia's only photocopy paper manufacturer, Paperlinx, produces virgin papers using woodchips from high conservation value forests. Each year they source around 475,000 tonnes of woodchips (CH Comprehensive Regional Assessment, 1997) from Victoria's Central Highlands and Gippsland: Melbourne's domestic water supply catchments and habitat to species threatened with extinction such as the Leadbeaters Possum, Spotted Tree Frog, Sooty Owl, Tiger Quoll, Powerful Owl and Tall Astelia Lily. Logging has detrimental impacts on many economic and non-economic forest values such as domestic water supplies, tourism and recreation.

Australia's sole paper manufacturer, Paperlinx, regrettably only makes 'recycled' papers using mostly pre-consumer waste. The problem with pre-consumer waste is that it contains essentially virgin pulp sourced directly from native forests. Truly recycled paper uses a large proportion of post-

consumer waste (paper that has been used at least once by consumers, after which it is gathered and sorted by a recycling company). Paperlinx has the resources and technology to manufacture paper from plantations and post-consumer waste. To help save our native forests, avoid Paperlinx 'recycled' papers until they decide to use genuine post-consumer waste and/or plantation pulp. Until that day, purchasing these products will not provide any pressure or incentive for Paperlinx to use the 500,000 cubic metres of recoverable post consumer printing and writing paper going directly to landfill each year.

Australian environment groups would love to wholeheartedly endorse a photocopy paper, unfortunately all available papers or the company producing them have significant negative impacts. The following list represents the best available options. A more comprehensive supplier list is available at: <www.paperlinxethical.shares.green.net.au>

Nautilus (also known as Canon 100): 100% recycled, of which approx 50% is post-consumer waste.

Recommended for black and white double or single sided photocopiers and printers. Available from:

- Friends of the Earth (03) 9419-8700
- Going Solar (03) 9328-4123
- Longbottom Paper (02) 9553-5911
- Moir & Co. 1800 252-669
- SCRAP (02) 9825-1062
- ecocern (02) 9337-2737
- Officeworks (some stores) 131-505
- Danka (02) 9978-6000 (min 5 reams)
- Canon (large orders only) 131-393

Corporate profile: Lenzing AG (the manufacturer) appears* to be involved in the woodchipping or pulping of native forests in Europe.

Canefields: (approx 75% sugarcane bagasse, 25% eucalypt plantation fibre). Standard or high performance version OS 2000 available.

Endorsed by Planet Ark. Available from:

Officeworks 131-505

SCRAP (02) 9825-1062

Spicers Paper (sold by pallets)1800 729-777

Viking 1800 621-862

<www.canefields.com.au> (retail and bulk)

Corporate profile: although TNPL(the manufacturer) does not appear to be directly involved in woodchipping or pulping of forests, it does appear to use pulp possibly from forests from the international market in the production of newsprint.

Cyclus (offset quality): 100% recycled (about75% post-consumer and 25% pre-consumer). Made in Denmark, archival quality, comes in A4 and A3, can be used for photocopiers, but is highly recommended for printing of annual reports, letterhead and newsletters by commercial printers. Available from:

KW Doggett (03) 9450-2222;(07) 3260-1588

Jaeger Fine Papers (02) 9938- 3444

CPI (03) 9239-3600; (08) 8447-1377; (07) 3390-8444; (02) 9681-0555;

(08) 9240-2222

Corporate profile: Stora Enso (the manufacturer) appears* to be involved in the woodchipping or pulping of native forests in Europe.

Enviro Board Paper (also called Botany Brown): 100% recycled, high percentage post-consumer waste. Not photocopy paper. Made in Australia by Visy, used mainly by printers. Comes in off-white and brown. Available in a variety of weights. Available from:

Premier Paper (03) 9416-8188

ecocern (02) 9337-2737

Raleigh Paper (marketed as Botanypaper) (03) 9558-0500; (07) 3865-2425;
(02) 9743-1255; (02) 6280-1870

Corporate profile: Visy do not appear to be involved in the woodchipping or pulping of native forests.

Harvest: sourced from 65% sugar cane bagasse and 35% plantation pine fibre; chlorine bleached. Made in South Africa. Not photocopy paper. Harvest is a coated printing paper and comes in matt, gloss and a variety of weights. Available from:

Raleigh Paper Raleigh Paper (03) 9558-0500; (07) 3865-2425; (02) 9743-1255;
(02) 6280-1870

Corporate profile: SAPPI (the manufacturer) appears* to be involved in the woodchipping or pulping of native forests in Europe and North America.

Datacopy (coloured version available) – also known as MoDo: although claimed to be 100% plantation paper, at least a percentage of fibre comes from sites that environment groups regard as natural forest. Elemental Chlorine free. World leaders inclosed loop water cycle. Comes in A4 and A3. A white high-performance paper for high speed copiers. Available from:

Angleton's (03) 9419-5855

Blackburn's (03) 9417-6966

W C Penfolds (03) 9650-5035; (08) 8232-7200; (02) 9233-5777; (07) 3221-4100;

Industrial Stationers, large orders only (03) 9614-2751

Corporate profile: m-real (the manufacturer) appears* to be involved in the woodchipping or pulping of native forests in Europe.

Renew 100 (similar coloured version, Outback, available): promoted as 100% recycled it contains approximately 70% pre-consumer waste. 10% pre- or post-consumer milk carton

material, 20% cotton linters (likely to contain genetically modified material as 30% of Australian cotton has *Bt bacterium* genes). ECF correction bleached

Corporate profile: Paperlinx (the manufacturer) is woodchipping or pulping native forests in Victoria.

Avoid these papers

Renew 80
 Uji Xerox Greenmap
 Reflex
 Copyright
 Contact Lasercopy
 Australian Copy Paper
 Crown
 Optix
 Precision
 Oz Copy
 Post Office A4 paper

*Determining where overseas corporations source their wood is difficult. We have assumed they're directly involved in forest destruction if: they pulp or woodchip native forest species or source from poorly managed forests (they do not claim to source from areas with independent, third party certification to a standard equal or exceeding that of the Forest Stewardship Council).

Other things to be aware of

Aside from using the most environmentally sound paper available, where possible, use less paper! Plantations are not always environmentally friendly. Issues that need to be addressed include clearance of native vegetation, genetic engineering, toxic pollution of soil, ground water, waterways and the ocean. We wish to acknowledge that the logging of Australian forests for the paper industry affects local Indigenous peoples.



Peter Stone
Cards Manager, The Shell Company of Australia Ltd
PO Box 872K
Melbourne Victoria 3001

Peter,

On June 15 1999 you sent me a letter about vehicle management systems and Shell Cards. I am not sure where you came across my business address because I would not have given Shell my details. I was not happy about receiving direct marketing paraphernalia from you. I have researched Shell and its activities in Nigeria, I actively boycott your petrol and have even been a member of numerous protests against your company.

One of the people I have read about is a person named Ken Saro-Wiwa, who was a writer, politician, and activist in Nigeria. He openly and publicly contradicted the 'official line' of both the Nigerian Government and Shell. He criticised the government in columns he wrote for the Nigerian newspapers *Punch*, *Vanguard* and *Daily Times*, he brought to light the plight of the very poor in Nigeria (something the government and big business tried to ignore), he criticised many of the Nigerian government's policies, he attacked the collusion of government and big business at the expense of his people (the Ogoni — who are one of over 200 ethnic peoples in Nigeria) and he called for an evaluation of the distribution of wealth in Nigeria in order to promote a 'fair go' for all. By doing this he risked imprisonment, torture and death.

In May 1994 he was arrested with eight others on false charges of 'incitement to murder', imprisoned for more than a year and then tried before a specially convened tribunal—with no right of appeal. On November 2, 1995, Ken Saro-Wiwa and the eight others were found guilty and sentenced to death.

On November 10, 1995, they were all murdered.

As you can imagine, as a writer myself who believes in the rights of all peoples to speak out and tell the truth, I was offended when I received your letter. I do not wish to ever receive anything from your company again. You obviously had no idea about my business because if you had you would have known I am a sole trader (freelance writer and editor) and have no need for a vehicle management system. Sending me correspondence was totally inappropriate. Don't do it again.

Mr. Peter Duncan
CEO/Chairman
The Shell Company of Australia
GPO Box 872K
Melbourne 3001

Peter,

On June 15 1999 Peter Stone (Cards Manager, The Shell Company of Australia Ltd) sent me a letter about vehicle management systems and Shell Cards. I was not happy about receiving direct marketing paraphernalia from you. I sent Peter Stone a letter stating, 'Sending me correspondence is totally inappropriate. Don't do it again.' As you can imagine, when I received more propaganda from Shell's Direct Marketing Manager, Margaret Kennedy, dated August 24 1999, I was pissed off. I have researched Shell and its activities in Nigeria, I actively boycott your petrol and have even been a member of numerous protests against your company.

One of the people I have read about is a person named Ken Saro-Wiwa: writer, politician and activist in Nigeria. He openly and publicly contradicted the 'official line' of both the Nigerian Government and Shell. He criticised the government in columns he wrote for the Nigerian newspapers *Punch*, *Vanguard* and *Daily Times*, he brought to light the plight of the very poor in Nigeria (something the government and big business ignore), he criticised many of the Nigerian Government's policies, he attacked the collusion of government and big business that caused his people (the Ogoni—who are one of over 200 ethnic peoples in Nigeria) to suffer and he called for an evaluation of the distribution of wealth in Nigeria in order to promote a 'fair go' for all. By doing this he risked imprisonment, torture and death.

In May 1994 he was arrested with eight others on false charges of 'incitement to murder', imprisoned for more than a year and then tried before a specially convened tribunal—with no right of appeal. On November 2, 1995, Ken Saro-Wiwa and the eight others were found guilty and sentenced to death.

On November 10, 1995, they were all murdered.

As a writer myself I was **offended** when I received your first letter. The fact that you ignored me and sent me another letter is **insulting**. As I told Peter Stone, **I do not wish to receive anything from your company EVER again**. I am telling you the same thing. I hope this is in plain enough English for you. You kill people and I don't want to have anything to do with you. I don't like repeating myself, but it is obvious I have to. **Sending me correspondence is totally inappropriate. Don't EVER do it again.**

PROTESTER SAFETY WITH DR GREG CARROT

Civil disobedience hints for around the blockade,
occupation and protest site.

'It is not the function of our government to keep the citizen from falling into error; it is the function of the citizen to keep the government from falling into error'

Robert H. Jackson (1892-1954), US Judge.

This article is a summary of an address by Dr. Carrot in early 2002. He was speaking at a Melbourne university about the impending Woomera2002 cavalcade of protest, possible police violence and the role he (and anyone committed to non-violence) could play as advocates of safe communities and safe civil disobedience.

First of all I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians, whose country we are now on.

Thank you all for coming. Today I intend going through some helpful tips to make your protest relaxed, comfortable and safe:

Police (colloquially known as cops):

There is one constant unsafe element at every violent protest: cops. Basically they are angry, aggressive, trained in violence, itching for a fight and armed to the teeth. My theory is that they don't have to be violent, nor do they have to be the seed of violence, and really, they don't have to be there. Protesters are more than capable of looking after themselves. Here's a very common experience. Say, for example, there are a number of pissed off cops standing in front of a bunch of protesters. These cops are not at home with their families, but instead are out in the hot desert, dressed in dark blue clothes, carrying heavy riot gear, lifting phallic truncheons and being seen holding unfashionable shields. This is a very unsafe situation. A powder keg. A pot ready to boil over. How can I, as an advocate of safety and nonviolence, make sure this situation does not spiral out of control, resulting in injury,

violence and possible arrest?

Well, one plan is to surreptitiously steal a truncheon from one of the cops and walk up and down behind the cop line, with people from the medical team, and whack each cop over the head with the truncheon, knocking them unconscious, thus creating a safe protest environment. An important point to remember here is that this should be done nonviolently and with a smile.

Another plan is to 'take out' the commanding officer (CO) and impersonate them. Walk up and down behind the line of cops saying, 'Go home to your families, have a nice meal, play with your children, help old ladies cross the street, stop all this nonsense, have an ice cream, take it easy, relax'. Be nice to them. That's all they want. If you listen to the way the COs call the cops names, fire them up, bad mouth the protesters and generally

'... THERE IS

CONFLICT HERE, BUT

WE'RE WILLING, IF

YOU ARE, TO PLAY

OUT THE CONFLICT

WITHOUT

VIOLENCE...'

incite violence it's no wonder the cops want to beat the shit out of protesters. By speaking to them kindly, giving them the day off, empowering them and their lifestyle choices you reduce their anger and disenfranchisement and give back their self esteem. The cops will be happier and you will help create peace in their minds and a safe place for the protest to evolve.

Baton charge

Baton charges are generally annoying for the many protesters who are often hit and injured by batons being wielded around willy-nilly. Often protesters/blockaders sit on the ground and lock themselves together with their arms and legs to try and nullify the baton charge. Unfortunately this doesn't always work because the cops are so overcome with violent-endorphins that they don't recognise that sitting down is a non violent way of saying, 'There is conflict here, but we're willing, if you are, to play out the conflict without violence'. It is not a sign of submission or weakness, more a sign of empathy and a request for recognition and value for what the protesters are saying, doing and protesting about. (Any David Attenborough

documentary about primates will explain this behaviour as one of the many types of behaviours animals exhibit when trying to resolve conflict without the use of physical violence.) The cops regularly ignore the signals and proceed to call in the horses or stomp all over the protesters, putting bootmarks on people's faces, or breaking bones. This is a bad situation for any protester to find themselves in.

Some would argue that protesters should change their tactic, become more aggressive, reject the notion of non-violence. Wrong. This only validates and perpetuates the cops' violent behaviour. Sitting down and humming; om-ing at the cops; telling jokes; screaming; laughing; staying silent; chanting:

... CHANTING: "THE PEOPLE, UNITED, WILL NEVER BE DEFEATED!"

AND VARIATIONS: "THE PIZZA, EATEN, WILL NEVER BE REHEATED!"
ARE ALL WORTHWHILE TACTICS.'

'The people, united, will never be defeated!' and variations: 'The pizza, eaten, will never be reheated!' are all worthwhile tactics. What are some other plans to try and stop the violence before it happens? It could be good to infiltrate the cops' headquarters and take all their shoes and hide them. That will stop them from stomping on the protesters. Tie their shoelaces together and hide their truncheons/shields/helmets. Replace the hard truncheons with those foam bats you get in show bags. But what if you can't stop the violence before it happens? How can you minimise the injuries and damage? One way might be to buy a couple of old cars and create a barrier around the protesters. Light fires in them, maybe. This way the cops won't be able to charge in stomping or bring in the horses. Alternatively, everybody could dress up as clowns, school children, Santa Clauses, bunnies, puppy dogs or apes — it's a bad look stomping funny, innocent, jolly or cute things. Hire wheelchairs and chain them together and sit in them. Again, it's a bad look attacking people in wheelchairs. Put 'mainstream' media at the front of the blockade, so if the police do come through, the cameras are in their faces and recording the events. Spread slippery stuff on the road around the blockade (banana skins, lard, detergent, soap or toothpaste). This will make

it hard for the cops to get up speed when they run at the protest/blockade. Set up bails of hay sprinkled with sugar, honey, oats and bits of carrots around the protest/blockade so the police horses stop and eat, rather than charge in.

Occupational health and safety (OH&S), environmental concerns and tax:

Often there are many OH&S issues at protest sites. Sharp objects; cop horses under the control of angry, violent or even inexperienced cops; fences with razor wire on top of them, unsteady fences that may fall over at any time; unsanitary truncheons; rusty, un-looked-after handcuffs; long, wet grass; un-badged cops; tree branches; cement poles; mud; slippery paths. On the day, among the hurly burly of a protest, it is often difficult, pretty much impossible (especially when the cops take their badges off) for the protest OH&S representative to find the cop OH&S liaison officer. Try talking to the cops about OH&S a day or two before the protest. Even though the cops are supposed to be taking care of the community, supposed to be keeping them

'... WHENEVER I GO TO A PROTEST AND IT'S BEEN RAINING OR LOOKS LIKE IT MIGHT RAIN I ALWAYS TAKE FIVE OR SIX EXTRA PAIRS OF SOCKS FOR ME AND MY FRIENDS. NOTHING WORSE THAN COLD FEET...'

safe, do not rely on them to undertake even a simple task like looking for rocks, broken glass, or sharp objects around the area before the protest. The old adage: 'If you want something done properly, do it yourself', applies. You'll have to do your own OH&S on the run. If a fence or other structure has fallen over it is important to let protesters know the

structure is a safety concern. Fliers are a good start, but people don't often read during the heat of a protest. If you can put safety tape around the structure that might do the trick. A 'Danger' sign would work effectively too.

I keep a little first aid kit in my bag at all times — just in case. Whenever I go to a protest and it's been raining or looks like it might rain I always take five or six extra pairs of socks for me and my friends. Nothing worse than

cold feet. I prefer 'Adventure Socks'TM, which you can buy from K-Mart. I always have good adventures in my Adventure SocksTM and they are Australian made, woollen, toasty-warm and nice and thick. I also carry thick, tough blankets with me just in case there is a breakout from a detention centre nearby and I'm called upon to put the blankets over the top of a fence topped with barbed or razor wire. People can cut themselves on that stuff. It's important when people are climbing over such fences that they do it safely, without injuring themselves on the fence or wire.

If a lot of your protesting is done outdoors in the sun you may be able to claim the cost of sunscreen, hats and sunglasses on your tax. Talk to the ATO or visit their website: www.ato.gov.au.

Demarcation disputes:

Often demarcation disputes arise between different affinity groups or between the cops and protesters. I once had to intervene to stop a fresh-faced young man who was working at a socialist stall from having a placard shoved up his bum by another protester.

'That's an illegal placard,' The socialist (S) said as the protester walked past.

The protester (P) asked, 'What?'

S: 'You're carrying an illegal placard. Placards have to have long wooden handles. Yours doesn't have one.'

P: 'You're kidding.'

S: 'No. I can't give you a legal placard, or a handle, but if you'd like to come over here and have a look at our placards... I could sell you one of ours.'

P: 'I'll tell you what you can do with your fucking placard—'

I intervened here and took the protester away from the capitalist-orientated, fresh-faced socialist and steered the protester towards the Food Not Bombs stall.

Often demarcation is as simple as protesters being in a space the cops want to be in themselves, and for various reasons the protesters don't want to give up their space. Sometimes demarcation flows into other areas and we

Handy Hints

Here's just a couple of hints to make your own occupation a little bit friendlier, a little bit safer, a bit more relaxed and more family-orientated.

Organise to occupy a comfy place. Running water (hot water is a bonus, especially if you're occupying in winter) and flushing toilets are vital. If you can, make sure the place has electricity so you can run a sound system, fridge, lights, stereo, laptops or an independent media centre.

see cops confiscating things from protesters, such as placards, cameras, video cassettes, recording devices, tripods and objects used to blockade roads or forest coupes. I have watched a number of these incidents and think I have come up with some answers. These tactics used to work on my sister when I was eight and she was five, so they might work on the cops. Say, for example I was playing with a toy and my sister wanted it, I'd pretend I didn't care and focus on something else. She'd immediately want the new toy. I'd put up a bit of a fight and then let her have it. She thought she'd won, when in fact I wanted the original toy all along. Or, if my sister was hanging around and I didn't want her there I'd tell my friends she had nits or smelly feet. Or I'd pretend I couldn't see her. Or I'd fart in her face. Or I'd repeat, in an annoying, nasal tone, everything she said and copy all her movements. That's really annoying. As you can see, with a bit of imagination these same tactics could be employed at your own protest demarcation dispute.

Occupations:

Occupations can last from a couple of minutes to days, weeks or months. They may be in vice chancellor's offices, media offices, wharves, ship containers, university courtyards, forest coupes earmarked for logging, outside parliament house, multinational corporate headquarters or an entire inner city.

When occupying offices always liberate

something interesting. The only rule is to do something witty and stylish with it afterwards. According to Irving Washington in his essay 'A Story About Stories', 'A group of us liberated the bust of Sir John Monash during a protest against up-front fees. Despite our best efforts, we were unable to change university policy and at every turn we were being portrayed by the media as a bunch of self-centred ratbags. We were desperate, so in the middle of the day we walked straight in, grabbed the bust and ran. Nobody questioned us because we looked like we had valid reasons and destinations. Three weeks later Sir John sent letters to the vice chancellor and set up his own website:

<www.geocities.com/Athens/Ithaca/4277/>, explaining he would not return to Monash University until education was made fair again. He also uploaded photos of his travels. So far he's been to Newcastle, Canberra (parliament house), Sydney (swimming at Bondi Beach and lunching at a Bondi café, Circular Quay: the Opera House, the harbour bridge), the Blue Mountains and Holbrook (beef capital of NSW and owner of an inland submarine). Last we knew he was heading to QLD. The prank put another spin on the protest and was perpetrated to provide inspiration in the face of overwhelming odds, during a time of little hope. We created our own story, our own future history. I could be anyone. I could be you. It was easy. Anyone can and should do it'.

If there are phones make lots of STD and ISD calls.

In the city pick places close to public transport, cinemas, pubs and theatres. Bring recycling bins, BBQs, sofas, seats, coffee tables, desks, eskies, hacky sacks, Frisbees, drums, guitars and bean bags with you.

Cooking facilities are good, but not necessary if you're near cafes, takeaways or pizza delivery places.

If you don't have toilets, or if the cops turn the plumbing off, hire porta loos or something, because pissing and shitting in a bucket is not fun for anyone.

Start a free university/TAFE/school so you can inform people about what you're doing.

Hold open air-raves/a folk festival/punk gigs/hip hop nights/spoken word performances. Invite the cops if you want — they often have access to the best drugs.

(Obviously when protesting/occupying in out of the way places like Woomera or Goolengook some of these comforts may have to be forgone — you'll know what to do.)

Media ('Everyone is a journalist; everyone a witness'):

Speaking of media misrepresentation, I've been to many a protest and after watching the media's interpretation of the incidents I've often wondered, 'Were these people at the same protests, "watching the same game" (so-to-speak)? Are they from the same planet? Why are protesters and protests always on the wrong side of the media?' Then I get to thinking, 'Is the Australian media stupid? Were they somewhere else when it all happened? Did they get the wrong media release?' The answer is probably 'yes' to these three questions, but that doesn't take away from the influence the media has. The only handy hint I have here is be your own media. Record everything. Put together information kits for the different media explaining the philosophy behind the protest. Give the media sympathetic footage and photos. They'll appreciate you doing their work for them. That's what the big companies and political parties do. It's not that hard and just like the Dole Army segments on both *A Current Affair* and *Today Tonight* showed, the media is ready to believe. Remember: '... A journalist is someone who says they are a journalist' — Devin Theriot-Orr (Coordinator, independent media centre, Seattle).

It's up to you how safe, relaxed and comfortable you want your civil disobedience to be. Do not leave anything to chance and do not,

under any circumstances, think that anyone else, be they affinity groups, the government, or the cops, will be making sure you or anyone else are safe. Walk around the area before the protest, map out hotspots, pick up any sharp objects and rocks, tape off any possible danger points like fallen-down fences or low-lying tree branches. When the cops come, don't trust that they're there to protect anyone. Always assume they are armed and angry. By using some of the above tips, I'm sure your protesting days will be full of fun and excitement, maybe a little controversy, but ultimately they will be safe. Good civil disobedience to you all!



